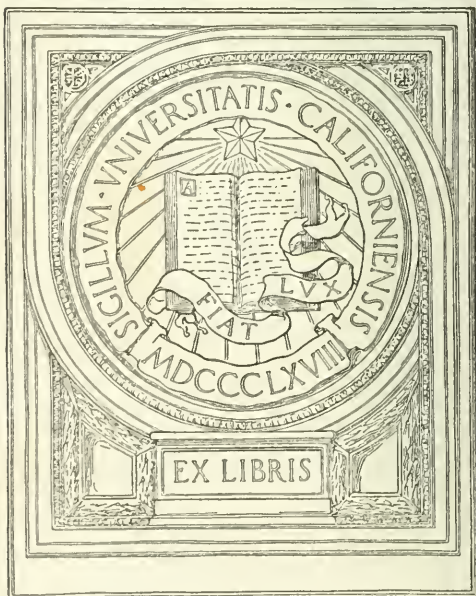




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THE POETRY OF JOB

BY

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"A NOBLE BOOK, EVERY MAN'S BOOK."—*Carlyle*

CHICAGO

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TO

PROFESSOR FRANZ DELITZSCH,

PROF. CHARLES A. BRIGGS *and* PROF. FRANCIS BROWN,

*This little volume
is respectfully and affectionately inscribed.*

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PREFACE.

IT has pleased God to send His truth to us by way of human minds and hearts, permitting the lights and shadows of earthly experience to mingle with the radiance from His throne. His truth has never been published on earth save in an earthly garb. Even as Christ, the supreme and absolute Word of the Father, took upon Him the seed of Abraham and tabernacled in the flesh, looking out upon life and death and immortality through human eyes, so the word from heaven in olden times had its earthly side, its tabernacle of flesh. It is indeed the word of God, but it is none the less truly the word of man. We honor the Lord by recognizing this fact, by accepting the methods of His tuition, and we also make a larger helpfulness and enjoyment of His word possible. The Bible has resources adapted to exert a beneficent influence which are only thus reached. For it not only contains a revelation of Divine truth and grace which infinitely

transcends the best dreams of the classic world, but it is also the treasure-house of poetry whose literary excellence ought to share the highest honors with Homer, with Sophocles and Sappho, and the bards of later ages. The following treatise, while aiming, especially in the translation, to make the spiritual lessons of Job plainer and more effectual, would call attention to the surprising beauty of the human elements in this portion of the Bible. There is little danger that, by so doing, the Divine teaching would receive less honor and become less dear ; on the contrary, such attention would in the main lead to a more appreciative estimate of the heavenly message. It does not detract from the beauty of the rainbow to know that it did not come down out of the skies perfect and complete, but that only the wonderful light came down, and found in our earthly atmosphere the lenses which could make its hidden riches visible to our mortal eyes. It is still God's bow, and though it should be arched through human tears.

In studying the Book of Job as poetry, the first and most difficult duty was to render the poem into English. It has been my endeavor to make this as perfect as the present state of

Semitic studies in general and of the poem of Job in particular would permit. There are words in the poem whose meaning is still uncertain, and many passages whose thought is more or less obscure. As it lay outside of the purpose of this essay to give the grounds of the translation from step to step, it may be proper to say that the interpretation here given, in the case of each word and sentence in the poem, has been adopted only after repeated and careful examination of all the philological evidence, and only after a repeated and careful examination of each detail in the light of the manifest aim and thought of the poem as a whole. Every conclusion has been reviewed and tested several times. The text that has been translated is that edited by L. Baer and Franz Delitzsch, Leipzig, 1875.

With regard to the form of the translation three remarks should be made. First, the translation is rhythmical, or, at least, constantly aims to be. Not metrical, for all that is claimed for the original is a carefully preserved rhythm. It is a mistake, I think, to endeavor to render the poem into metrical verse; but any translation of it that aims at perfection must be rhythmical. As we are not satisfied with a

[†] prose translation of the Faust or the Divine Comedy, so we should not be satisfied with a prose translation of Job.

Second, this translation aims to give the particular rhythmical movement of the original. (The Hebrew lines in Job generally have three tones, the only important exceptions being the two-toned and the four-toned lines, about fifty-nine of the former and eighty-five of the latter.* The number of syllables belonging to the sphere of a single tone varies constantly, producing what would be designated, according to our canons of meter, a mingling of iambic, trochaic, dactylic, and anapaestic feet; but the rhythm is not often disturbed by this freedom.) The present translation avails itself of the same liberty that is found in the original. The three-toned Hebrew lines have been rendered into three-toned English lines, and the rhythm of the two-toned and four-toned lines also has been preserved. (As an example of three-toned lines, we may take this :

“The wicked have ceased there from troubling,
And there are the weary at rest.”

[*Chap. iii. 17.*]

* *Vide* Professor Briggs's "Biblical Study," Chapter ix.

Examples of the four-toned and two-toned lines are the following :

“The wicked man is in pain all his days,
And the sum of the years reserved for the tyrant.”
[Chap. xv. 20.]

“My spirit is broken,
My days are extinct.
The grave-yard is mine.”
[Chap. xvii. 1.]

Where it was not possible to give the thought of the original closely, and at the same time secure a flowing rhythm, the rhythm has been sacrificed to the thought. But I trust this has not often been found necessary.

Third, no attempt has been made to divide the poem into stanzas, inasmuch as it still seems very doubtful whether a regular strophical arrangement belonged to the original. The names of God have been transliterated or translated, according to the requirements of the English line: a freedom which, in poetry at least, should need no apology.

For the study of the poetical conceptions of the Book of Job the literature is exceedingly meagre. The work of Bishop Lowth, *De Sacra Hebræorum Poesi*, 1753, and that of Herder, *Der Geist der Hebræischen Poesie*, 1782-3,

contain appreciative suggestions, though neither gives special study to the poem of Job. It has been my aim in this essay to contribute somewhat to the interpretation of the Book of Job as poetry. This greatest product of the Hebrew mind has been and still is a more closely sealed book than is any one of the illustrious poems of history ; yet, surely, considered even as a literary creation, it should be ranked with the highest efforts of human genius.

G. H. G.

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

A RHYTHMICAL TRANSLATION OF JOB.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I-II. THE PROLOGUE	17
III. JOB'S CURSE	23
THE FIRST CYCLE OF THE POEM.	
IV-V. ELIPHAZ	25
VI-VII. JOB	29
VIII. BILDAD	33
IX-X. JOB	34
XI. ZOPHAR	39
XII-XIV. JOB	41
THE SECOND CYCLE OF THE POEM.	
XV. ELIPHAZ	47
XVI-XVII. JOB	49
XVIII. BILDAD	53
XIX. JOB	54
XX. ZOPHAR	57
XXI. JOB	59
THE THIRD CYCLE OF THE POEM.	
XXII. ELIPHAZ	62
XXIII-XXIV. JOB	64
XXV. BILDAD	68
XXVI-XXVIII. JOB	68
XXIX-XXXI. THE SOLILOQUY OF JOB	74
XXXII-XXXVII. ELIHU	82
XXXVIII-XLII. JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS AND JOB'S ANSWERS	96
XLII. THE EPILOGUE	107

PART II.

INTERPRETATION OF THE POEM.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF JOB	111
II. NATURE IN THE POEM OF JOB	137
III. THE ANIMAL KINGDOM IN THE POEM OF JOB	160
IV. HUMAN LIFE IN THE POEM OF JOB . .	179
V. THE POET'S CONCEPTIONS OF GOD . .	203

PART I.

A RHYTHMICAL TRANSLATION OF JOB

THE POETRY OF JOB.

PART I.

A RHYTHMICAL TRANSLATION OF JOB.

THE PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was a man in the land of Uz, by the name of Job, and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and turned away from evil. Now there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. And his substance was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and very many servants; and that man was greater than all the sons of the East. Now his sons used to go and make a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they used to send and call their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.
5] And it came to pass, when the days of the

NOTE.—The Prologue, with the exception of chapter i. 21, also the Introductory verse of many chapters, together with chapter xxxii. 1-5, and the Epilogue, chapter xlii. 7-17, are in prose.

feast had circled round, Job sent and sanctified them; and he arose early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all, for Job said, Perhaps my children have sinned, and have parted with God in their heart. Thus did Job continually.

Now the day arrived when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, and the Adversary also came among them. And Jehovah said unto the Adversary, Whence comest thou? And the Adversary answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking about upon it. And Jehovah said unto the Adversary, Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him on the earth, a man blameless and upright, one who feareth God and turneth away from evil. Then the Adversary answered Jehovah and said, Doth Job fear God for 10] naught? Hast not Thou thyself set a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance has increased in the land. But put forth now Thy hand and touch all that he hath: verily, he will renounce Thee unto Thy face. And Jehovah said unto the Adversary, Behold, all that

he hath is in thy power: only against him thou shalt not put forth thy hand. And the Adversary went out from the presence of Jehovah.

Now the day came when his sons and his daughters were eating and were drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother. And a messenger came to Job and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the she-asses were feeding 15] beside them, and the Sabæans made an attack and carried them away, and the young men they smote with the edge of the sword; and I escaped, only I alone, to tell thee. While this one was speaking, another came and said, The fire of God fell from heaven, and kindled upon the sheep and the young men, and consumed them; and I escaped, only I alone, to tell thee. While this one was speaking, another came and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and came against the camels, and carried them away, and the young men they smote with the edge of the sword; and I escaped, only I alone, to tell thee. While this one was speaking, another came and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and were drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother; and, behold, a great wind came from

beyond the desert, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they died ; and I escaped, only I alone, to 20] tell thee. And Job rose up, and rent his garment, and shaved his head, then fell upon the ground and worshipped.

And he said :

Naked came I from my mother's womb,
And naked shall thither return :
Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken ;
The name of Jehovah be blessed !

In all this Job sinned not, neither ascribed folly to God.

CHAPTER II.

NOW the day arrived when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, and the Adversary also came among them to present himself before Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto the Adversary, Whence comest thou ? And the Adversary answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking about upon it. And Jehovah said unto the Adversary, Hast thou considered my servant Job ? for there is none like him on the earth, a man blameless and upright,

one who feareth God and turneth away from evil; and still he holdeth fast his integrity: so thou hast moved me against him, to destroy him, without cause. Then the Adversary answered Jehovah and said, Skin for skin, and 5] all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth now Thy hand, and touch his bone and his flesh: verily, unto Thy face will he renounce Thee. And Jehovah said unto the Adversary, Behold, he is in thy hand: only his life preserve.

Then the Adversary went forth from the presence of Jehovah, and smote Job with a grievous sore from the sole of his foot to his crown. And he took him a potsherd with which to scratch himself, sitting in the midst of the ashes. And his wife said unto him, Dost thou cling to thine integrity still? Renounce 10] God, and die! Then he said unto her, As one of the foolish women speaketh, so dost thou speak. The good shall we receive from God, and the evil shall we not receive? In all this Job sinned not with his lips.

Now the three friends of Job heard of all this evil that had come upon him, and they came each from his place, Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the

Naamathite, and they met together, as agreed, to come and lament for him and comfort him. And they lifted up their eyes afar off, and they recognized him not ; then they lifted up their voice and wept. And each man rent his mantle, and they scattered dust upon their heads toward heaven. Then they sat down with him on the earth seven days and seven nights, no one speaking unto him a word, because they saw that the pain was very great.

JOB'S CURSE.

CHAPTER III.

AFTERWARD Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. And Job answered and said :

- O PERISH the day in which I was born,
And the night that said, A man is conceived!
That day—O let it be darkness!
May Elóah not seek it from heaven,
And o'er it let brightness not shine!
- 5 May darkness and gloom redeem it!
Let a cloud make its dwelling upon it!
Affright it the dark'nings of day!
That night—let obscurity seize it!
In the days of the year let it joy not,
Nor come into the number of months!
Behold, that night—be it barren!
A joy-ery enter it not!
Let the cursers of day curse it,
Those ready to stir up the dragon!
Be darkened the stars of its dawning;
Let it wait for the light, and there be none,
And dawn's eyelashes may it not see!
- 10 For it shut not the doors of the womb,
And hid not toil from my eyes.
Why could I not die from the womb,
From the womb come forth to expire?
Wherefore did the knees come to meet me,

- And why the breasts, that I sucked?
For now I had lain undisturbed,
I had slept: then should I have rest,
With kings and with councillors high,
Who built for themselves mausoleums ;
15 Or with princes possessed of gold,
Who filled up their houses with silver.
As a still-birth, hid, I'd not be ;
As babes who have not seen the light.
The wicked have ceased there from troubling,
And there are the weary at rest.
Together in peace are the captives,
They hear not a taskmaster's voice.
There small and great are the same,
And the servant is free from his lord.
20 Wherefore gives He light to the weary,
And life to the bitter of soul ?
Who hope for death, but there is none,
Who dig for it more than for treasure ;
Who joy with joy exceeding,
Who exult when they find a grave ;
To a man whose pathway is hid,
Whom Elóah hath hedged round about.
For instead of my bread my sigh doth come,
And my roarings are poured out like waters.
25 If I sorely fear, it befalls me ;
And that which I dread comes upon me.
I have not peace, or quiet, or rest ;
Yet trouble comes.

THE FIRST CYCLE OF THE POEM.

ELIPHAZ.

CHAPTER IV.

AND Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said :

SHOULD one venture a word unto thee,
wouldst thou fret ?

But to hold back his words who is able ?

Lo, many hast thou corrected,

And feeble hands hast made strong ;

Him who staggered thy words did restore,

Thou confirmedst the tottering knees :

5 But now unto thee it doth come, and thou fallest,
It reaches to thee, and thou'rt frightened.

Is not thy true fear thy reliance ;

And thy hope, thine innocent ways ?

Think now, what just one has perished,

And where were the upright cut off ?

As I see, the ploughers of falsehood

And sowers of mischief—they reap it.

By the breath of Elóah they perish,

By the wind of his anger they vanish.

10 Lion's cry and the voice of the roarer,
And the young lions' teeth are broken.

The strong one dies without prey,

And the whelps of the lioness scatter.

- Now a word came stealing upon me,
And my ear caught the murmur thereof
In thoughts from the visions of night,
When falleth on men heavy sleep.
Fear fell upon me and terror,
And caused all my bones to shake.
15 And a wind goes floating before me ;
The hair of my flesh riseth up.
It stands, but I know not its shape ;
A form is before my eyes,
A whisper and voice I hear :
“Can a mortal be juster than God,
Or a man than his Maker more pure !
Behold, in His servants He trusts not,
And chargeth His angels with error :
Much more the clay-house dwellers,
Who have their foundation in dust,
Who are crushed for a moth.
20 From morning till eve they are shattered,
Unnoticed they perish forever.
When their tent-cord within them is loosed,
They die, do they not ? in unwisdom.”

CHAPTER V.

CALL now, is there any to hear thee ?
And to which holy one wilt thou turn ?
Nay, anger slayeth a fool,
And a simple one passion doth kill.

- I myself saw a fool taking root,
And straightway I cursed his abode.
His sons are far distant from help,
And are crushed in the gate, while none saves.
- 5 Whose harvest the hungry doth eat,
And plucketh it e'en from the thorns,
And a noose doth seize on their wealth.
For sorrow comes not from the dust,
Nor doth trouble spring out of the ground.
Nay, man unto trouble is born,
As the children of flame fly aloft.
Yet I would seek unto El,
And bring my cause unto God.
Who doeth great things, and past searching,
Miraculous deeds without number ;
- 10 Who dispenseth rain on the earth,
And water sends over the fields,
To set the lowly on high,
And mourners are lifted to freedom ;
Who frustrates the thoughts of the crafty,
That their hands can achieve nothing real ;
Who captures the wise by their craft,
And the plan of the cunning is routed.
By day they light upon darkness,
And at midday they grope as at night.
- 15 So He saves from their sword-like mouth,
And the poor from the hand of the strong.
So hope doth arise for the weak,
And iniquity shutteth its mouth.

- Lo, happy the man whom Elóah corrects,
And th' Almighty's reproof do not scorn.
For when He wounds, He binds up;
He hurts, and His hands do heal.
In six distresses He'll save thee,
And in seven shall touch thee no evil.
- 20 In famine He saves thee from death,
And in war from the might of the sword.
At the scourge of the tongue thou shalt hide,
Shalt not fear when oppression comes.
Thou shalt laugh at destruction and hunger,
And the beast of the field, fear thou not.
For with stones of the field is thy league,
And with thee the wild beast is at peace.
And thou'lt know that 'tis well with thy tent,
Shalt thy dwelling inspect, nor miss aught;
- 25 And shalt know that great is thy seed,
And thine offspring as grass of the earth.
Thou shalt come to the grave in strength,
As a sheaf goeth up in its time.
Lo, this we have searched: thus it is.
Observe it, and know for thyself.

JOB.

CHAPTER VI.

AND Job answered and said :

O THAT fully weighed were my plaint,
And my woe too held up in the scales !
For now it would weigh down the sand of the
seas :

Therefore did my words speak rashly.
For th' Almighty's arrows are in me,
Whose poison my spirit doth drink ;
God's terrors are ordered against me.

5 Doth a wild ass bray over grass,
Or loweth an ox o'er his fodder ?
Can one eat what is stale, not salted ?
Is there taste in the white of an egg ?
My soul refuseth to touch them ;
As the taint of my food are they.
O that my request might come,
And Elóah my hope would grant !
That Elóah would will to crush me,
Loose His hand, and so cut me off !

10 Then should my solace still be—
And I'd joy in pain that He spares not—
That I hid not the Holy One's words.
What's my strength, that I should have hope,
What my end, that I should be calm ?

- My strength—is it strength of stones,
Or is the flesh on me brass?
Or am I not utterly helpless,
And is not true strength thrust from me?
Love is due the oppressed from his friend,
Though the fear of th' Almighty he leaves.
- 15 As a brook are my brethren deceitful,
As the bed of vanishing brooks,
Which fail by reason of ice,
While the snow hides itself upon them.
When they are troubled, they vanish;
Is it hot, they dry up from their place.
The caravans alter their course,
They ascend in the desert, and perish.
The bands out of Tema beheld,
The trav'lers of Sheba longed for them.
- 20 They blushed because they confided,
They came there, and shame was upon them.
For now ye are like unto it:
Ye see something frightful, and fear.
Is't that I have said, Give to me,
And out of your wealth make me gifts?
Or rescue me out of distress,
And save me from tyrants' hand?
Instruct me, and I will be silent;
Wherein I have erred make me know.
- 25 How pleasant are straightforward words!
Yet what doth your proving prove?
Mere words do ye seek to refute?

- But a crazy man's words are the wind's.
Ye would even cast lots o'er an orphan,
And bargain over your friend.
But now be pleased to look on me,
And, indeed, I'd not lie to your face.
Turn now, let there not be a wrong;
Yea, turn, my right's in it still.
30 Is iniquity under my tongue,
Or cannot my palate tell evil?

CHAPTER VII.

- H**AS not mortal a warfare on earth,
And his days—are they not as a hireling's?
As a servant who longs for the shadow,
And a hireling who waits for his pay:
So I have received months of ill,
Sad nights have been counted to me.
As I lay me to rest, then I say,
When rise I? but eve groweth long,
And till dawn I am full of tossings.
5 My flesh is clothéd with worms and earth-clods,
My skin groweth hard, and then breaks.
My days fly more swift than a shuttle,
And they vanish away without hope.
Reflect that my life is a breath;
Not again shall my eye behold good.
Eye that sees me shall see me no more:
Upon me are Thine eyes, and I'm not.
As a cloud melts away and is gone,

- So who goes to Sheol shall not rise ;
10 He shall not come again to his house,
And his place shall know him no more.
I also will not hold my peace,
I will speak in my spirit's distress,
Will lament in my anguish of soul.
A sea am I, am I a whale,
That a watch Thou should'st set over me ?
When I say that my couch shall console me,
My bed shall ease my complaint ;
Then with dreams Thou dost frighten me sore,
And with visions dost make me afraid.
15 And so my soul prefers strangling,—
Death before my bones !
I loathe it ! I would not live alway :
Cease from me, for vain are my days.
What is man that Thou makest him great,
And settest Thy heart upon him ?
That Thou seekest him morning by morning,
From moment to moment dost prove him ?
How long wilt Thou not look from me,
Not desist till I swallow my spittle ?
20 Have I sinned, what do I to Thee,
Observer of men !
Why hast Thou set me for Thine onset,
That a burden I am to myself ?
Why wilt Thou not pardon my trespass,
And cause my sin to pass by ?
For now I lie down in the dust,
And seekest Thou me, I'll not be.

BILDAD.

CHAPTER VIII.

AND Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

HOW long wilt thou utter these things,
And thy words be a violent wind?
As for God, perverteth He judgment,
And th' Almighty pervert what is right?
If thy children against Him transgressed,
He gave them o'er to their sin.

5 If thou dost seek unto God,
And to th' Almighty dost pray;
If clean and upright thou art:
Yea, then will He rouse up o'er thee,
And thy righteous dwelling restore;
Thy former state shall be small,
And thy latter become very great.
For ask now of past generations,
And seek out their fathers' deep things;
For of yesterday we, and we know not,
Since our days are a shadow on earth.

10 Will not they instruct thee, speak to thee,
And out of their heart bring forth words?
Can a rush grow save in a marsh,
Can a flag without water spring up?
'Tis yet fresh, it cannot be plucked,
But it withers before any plant:

- Such the paths of all who leave God,
And the wicked man's hope shall die,
He whose trust is a fragile thing,
And a spider's house is his hope.
- 15 He leans on his house, and it stands not ;
He grasps it, it doth not endure.
He is full of sap in the sunshine,
And his shoots o'er his garden come forth ;
Round a mound are his roots interlaced,
Between the stones he crowds through.
If He blots him out from his place,
It denies him, "I never have seen thee."
Lo, that is the joy of his path,
And others spring forth from the dust.
- 20 Lo, God contemns not the perfect,
And grasps not the hand of the wicked.
He will yet fill thy mouth with laughter,
And thy lips with the sound of joy.
With shame shall thy haters be clothed,
And the tent of the wicked shall perish.

JOB.

CHAPTER IX.

AND Job answered and said :

I KNOW of a truth it is so :
How can mortal be righteous with God ?
Should he wish to contend with Him,

- He could answ'r Him not one of a thousand.
Wise of heart and strong in might,
Who has dared Him, and yet remained whole ?
5 Who the mountains removes, and they know not,
Because in His wrath He o'erturned them ;
Who shaketh the earth from its place,
And its pillars do reel to and fro ;
Who speaks to the sun, and it shines not,
And setteth a seal on the stars ;
Who spreads out the heavens alone,
And walks o'er the heights of the sea ;
Who maketh the Bear, Orion,
The Cluster and Chambers of Teman ;
10 Who doeth great things beyond searching,
And wonderful deeds without number.
Lo, He passeth before me, I see not ;
And glides by, but I do not observe him.
Lo, He seizeth, and who can restrain Him ?
Who say to Him, What doest Thou ?
Elóah restrains not His wrath :
Beneath Him have bowed Rahab's helpers.
Much less could I make Him an answer,
Could choose out my words with Him,
15 I who could not reply, had I right ;
I should have to pray to my Judge.
Had I called, and He made me an answer ;
I'd not trust that my voice He had heard,
He who bruiseeth me sore with a tempest,
And adds to my wounds without cause.

He suffers me not to take breath,
But sates me with bitternesses.
If the strength of the mighty [decides], "Be-
hold!"

Or if judgment, "Who summoneth me?"

- 20 Were I righteous, my mouth would condemn me;
Were I blameless, would prove me perverse.
I am blameless!—care not for my soul!

I abhor my life!

'Tis all one, and so I declare it:
He destroys both the blameless and wicked.
If a scourge doth suddenly slay,
The despair of the guiltless He mocks.
Given up is the land to the wicked;
The face of its judges He veils:

If not, who then is it?

- 25 And my days are swifter than couriers;
They flee, they see nothing good.
They glide by as boats of bulrushes,
As an eagle swoops down on its prey.
If I say, I'll forget my complaint,
Will relax my face and look glad;
Then I shudder at all of my pains,
I know that Thou wilt not acquit me.

I must be bad!

Why wear myself out then in vain?

- 30 If I should wash me with snow,
And with potash my hands should make clean;
Then into the pit Thou wouldst dip me,

So that my clothes would abhor me.
 For He is not man like myself,
 That I might reply unto Him,
 That we might come together in judgment.
 Between us there standeth no judge,
 To lay his hands on us both.
 O let Him take from me His rod,
 And His dread—let it not cause me fear ;
 35 Then I'll speak, and will not be afraid ;
 For I am not thus with myself.

CHAPTER X.

MY soul is sick of my life ;
 I will loosen within me my plaint,
 I will speak in my anguish of soul,
 Say to God, O do not condemn me !
 Let me know why Thou strivest with me.
 Is't becoming in Thee to oppress,
 To scorn the fine work of Thy hands,
 And shine on the counsel of sinners ?
 Eyes of flesh hast Thou,
 As the seeing of man dost Thou see ?
 5 As the days of frail man are Thy days,
 Or Thy years as the days of a man ?
 For Thou seekest my wickedness out,
 And Thou searchest after my sin ;
 Though Thou knowest I am not guilty,
 And none from Thy hand can release.

- Thy hands did fashion and form me
All round, and Thou blottest me out!
Call to mind that as clay Thou didst form me,
And Thou bringest me back to the dust!
- 10 Didst Thou not pour me forth as milk,
And cause me to thicken like curd?
Thou didst clothe me with skin and with flesh,
With bones and with sinews didst hedge me;
Life and mercy Thou gavest to me,
And Thy care has guarded my breath:
Yet this Thou didst hide in Thy heart,
I know that this was in Thy mind.
If I sinned, then Thy watch was upon me,
And Thou didst not acquit me of wrong.
- 15 If I wickedly dealt, woe was me!
Were I just, I could not lift my head,
Full of shame and seeing my grief.
If it rose, Thou didst lion-like hunt me,
And dealt with me strangely again.
Thou renewedst Thy witnesses 'gainst me
And increasedst Thine anger at me,
Fresh troops and an army against me.
And why brought'st Thou me from the womb?
I ought to have died, and unseen:
As had I not been I should be;
From the womb to the grave borne away.
- 20 Are not my days few? Let him cease,
Turn away that I cheer up a little,
Ere I go—and I shall not return—

To a land of darkness and gloom,
To a land of blackness like midnight,
[A land] of gloom and disorder,
Where it shineth like midnight.

ZOPHAR.

CHAPTER XI.

AND Zophar the Naamathite answered and said :

- SHOULD a myriad of words go unanswered,
And a man of mere talk be held just ?
Thy boastings, they bring men to silence ;
And so thou dost mock unrebuked.
And thou sayest. My doctrine is pure,
And clean have I been in Thine eyes.
- 5 And yet, O that Elóah would speak,
And would open His lips with thee ;
And would tell thee the deep things of wisdom,
That twofold in counsel they are ;
And know that God drops for thee part of thy
sin.
- Canst thou find out the depth of Elóah,
Or fathom th' Almighty's perfection ?
Heights of heaven ! what canst thou do ?
Than Sheól it is deeper ! what know ?
Its measure is longer than earth,
And broader is it than the sea.

- 10 When He glideth by and arrests,
And summons to judgment, who stays Him?
For men of mischief He knows,
And badness He easily sees :
So a hollow head might grow wise,
And a wild ass's foal become man.
If thou dost make ready thy heart,
And spread out thy palms unto Him ;—
Is there sin in thy hand, cast it hence,
Nor let wickedness dwell in thy tents ;
- 15 Yea, then shalt thou lift up thy face without
stain,
Shalt be steadfast, nor have any fear.
For trouble shalt thou forget,
Shalt remember as waters that pass :
And life shall rise brighter than midday ;
Is there gloom, it shall be as the morning.
And thou shalt trust, for there's hope ;
Thou shalt spy round, shalt lie down secure.
Thou shalt rest with none making afraid,
And many thy face shall caress.
- 20 But the eyes of the wicked languish,
And refuge has ceased for them :
Their hope is to breathe out the soul.

JOB.

CHAPTER XII.

AND Job answered and said :

- OF a truth, now, ye are the people,
And wisdom will perish with you !
Even I have a mind, as you have ;
Not second am I unto you :
But who does not know things like these ?
A jest for his friend, that am I !
One who called upon God and was heard,
The righteous, the upright a jest !
5 Ill has scorn in the lucky man's thought ;
It is ready for tottering feet.
In peace are the robbers' tents,
And provokers of God have rest,
He who takes in his hand Elóah.
But ask now the beasts, and they shall instruct
thee,
And the fowl of the heaven, and they shall thee
tell :
Or speak to the earth, and it shall instruct thee,
And relate it to thee shall the fish of the sea :
Who knows not in all of these things
That the might of Jehovah hath done this,
10 In whose hand is the breath of all creatures,
And the spirit of all human flesh ?
The ear, should it not try words,

- As the palate tasteth its food ?
Among aged men there is wisdom,
And with length of days understanding.
With Him is wisdom and might ;
To Him belong counsel and prudence.
- 15 Behold, He pulls down, and it is not built up ;
He locks up a man, and the door is not opened :
Lo, He shuts in the waters, and they are dried up ;
Sends them forth, they destroy the earth.
With Him is strength and true wisdom,
Deceived and deceiver are His,
Who leads away councillors barefoot,
And judges He rendereth fools ;
The fetter of kings He doth loose,
And bindeth a belt round their loins ;
Who leads away priests without shoes,
And causeth the ancient to fall ;
- 20 Who takes away speech from the trusty,
And depriveth the elders of judgment ;
Who poureth out scorn upon princes,
And looseth the belt of the strong ;
Who uncovers the depths out of darkness,
And bringeth thick gloom unto light ;
Who exalteth the nations, and smites them ;
Who enlargeth the nations, and bans them ;
Who disheartens the leaders of earth,
Makes them stray in a pathless waste.
They grope in the gloom without light,
He lets them stray like a drunkard.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEHOLD, mine eye hath seen all ;
 Mine ear hath heard, and hath marked it.

As you know, I also do know ;

Not second am I unto you.

Yet I to th' Almighty would speak,

And would like to reason with God.

But ye are devisers of falsehood ;

Menders with lies are ye all.

- 5 O would you but keep utter silence,
 And that should serve you as wisdom.

I pray you, hear my reproof,

And heed the rebukes of my lips.

Will ye speak what is bad for God's sake,

And for Him will ye utter deceit ?

Will ye flatter Him,

Will ye plead for God ?

Is it good He should thoroughly search you ?

Or as one mocks a man mock ye Him ?

- 10 Right sharply will he rebuke you,

If secretly ye are partial.

Will not His majesty fright you,

And upon you His terror descend ?

Your maxims are proverbs of ashes ;

Your defences, defences of clay.

Give me silence, that I may speak,

And let come upon me what may.

Why bear I my flesh in my teeth,

And take my life in my hand ?

- 15 Behold, He will slay me ; I hope not :
But my ways I will prove to His face.
This too is deliv'rance for me,
That a wicked one comes not before Him.
O hearken well to my word,
And be my defence in your ears.
Lo, now I have ordered the suit ;
I know I shall stand justified.
Who is he that can argue with me ?
For now I would hush and expire.
- 20 But two things do not unto me,
Then will I not hide from Thy face :
Thy hand from upon me remove,
And let not Thy dread cause me fear.
Then call Thou, and I will reply :
Or I'll speak, and answer Thou me.
My crimes and my sins are how many ?
Make me know my transgression and sin.
Wherefore dost Thou cover Thy face,
And why dost Thou count me Thy foe ?
- 25 The wind-tossed leaf wilt Thou scare,
And chase the dry stubble away ?
For Thou writest against me harsh things,
Mak'st me heir of the sins of my youth.
And Thou putttest my feet in the stocks,
And dost carefully watch all my ways ;
Mak'st a line round the soles of my feet,—
I who fail like a worm-eaten thing,
As a garment that moths have consumed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE man of woman born,
Short lived and full of unrest!
He comes forth as a flower, and is withered;
Like a shadow he fleeth, and stays not.
E'en on this Thou hast opened Thine eyes,
And brought me to judgment with 'Thee'!
O came a clean one from unclean!

Not one!

- 5 If a limit is set to his days,
His number of moons known to 'Thee';
His bounds Thou hast set that he pass not;
Turn away from him that he rest,
Till he joy in his day as a hireling.
For there is hope for the tree;
If felled, it still can sprout forth,
And its tender shoot doth not fail.
Though its root should grow old in the earth,
And its stump should die in the dust;
At the scent of water it sprouteth,
And bringeth forth shoots like a plant.
- 10 But a man doth die, and is prostrate:
When a mortal expires, where is he?
The waters do fail from the sea,
And a stream groweth utterly dry;
So a man lieth down, not to rise:
Till the skies be no more, they awake not,
And are roused not up from their sleep.

O that in Sheól Thou would'st hide me,
Conceal me till past be Thy wrath,
Wouldest set me a bound and recall me !
If man die, shall he live again ?
All the days of my warfare I'd wait,
Until my release should come.

- 15 Thou wouldst call, and to Thee I'd reply ;
For the work of Thy hands Thou wouldst yearn.
But now Thou countest my steps.
Dost Thou not spy out my sin ?
My transgression is sealed in a bag,
And Thou fastenest up my sin.
But a mountain that falleth is shattered,
And a rock is removed from its place ;
The waters do wear away stones,
Its floods sweep the earth's dust away :
And the hope of frail man Thou destroyest.
- 20 Thou subdu'st him for aye, and he goes ;
Marring his face Thou reject'st him.
If his sons come to honor, he knows not ;
And regards them not if despised.
His flesh only on him is pained,
And his soul within him doth weep.

THE SECOND CYCLE OF THE POEM.

ELIPHAZ.

CHAPTER XV.

AND Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said :

SHOULD a wise man reply with vain knowledge,
And with winds from the east fill his breast,
Striving with words unavailing,
And with speeches by which he serves naught?
Thou art even destroying fear,
And diminishing prayer before God.

5 For thy wickedness teacheth thy mouth,
And thou choosest the tongue of the subtle.
Thy mouth, not I, condemns thee,
And against thee bear witness thy lips.
As the first of men wast thou born,
And before the hills wast brought forth?
In the council of God didst thou listen,
And wisdom withdraw to thyself?
What dost thou know that we know not,
What markest that is not with us?

10 With us are the hoary and aged,
Exceeding thy father in days.
Too little for thee are God's comforts,
And a word gently spoken with thee?
Wherefore does thy heart bear thee on,

- And why roll thine eyes to and fro?
That thou turnest thy spirit 'gainst God,
And mere words bringest forth from thy mouth.
What is mortal, that he should be clean,
That the woman-born one should be just?
- 15 Behold, in His pure ones He trusts not,
And the heavens are not clean in His eyes :
Much less is the vile and corrupt,
A man who drinks mischief like water.
- I will teach thee ; heed me :
And what I have seen I will tell,
That which wise men have declared
From their fathers, and have not hid.
To them was the land wholly given,
And there passed not among them a stranger.
- 20 The wicked man is in pain all his days,
And the sum of the years reserved for the tyrant.
A terrible sound in his ears—
In peace comes the robber upon him.
He expects no return from the darkness,
And chosen is he for the sword.
He roams for his bread, “ Ah where ! ”
He knows that near by stands the day of gloom.
Distress and anxiety fright him ;
It vanquishes him like a lance-trained king.
- 25 For he stretched out his hand against God.
Was defiant against the Almighty.
He ran with the neck against Him,
With the bosses thick of his shields ;

- For he covered his face with his fat,
And fatness he put on the loin.
And he dwelt in cities laid waste,
In houses where men should not live,
Which in ruins were destined to lie.
He shall save not ; his wealth shall not stand ;
Nor their substance bend down to the ground.
30 He doth not escape from the darkness ;
A flame doth wither his branch ;
He departs by the breath of His mouth.
Let him trust not in wrong, he's deceived ;
For wrong shall be his exchange.
It is finished, or e'er his day comes,
And his curving branch is not green.
He shakes off as the vine his sour grapes,
And casts as the olive his bloom.
For the clan of the godless is barren,
And fire eats up the tents of corruption.
35 They mischief conceive, and bear sin,
And deceit they devise in their breast.

JOB.

CHAPTER XVI.

AND Job answered and said :

MANY things like these I have heard :
Ye all are wretched consolers.
Have windy discourses an end,

- Or what excites thee to answer?
I also could speak as you do,
If your soul were in place of my own ;
Could put words together against you,
And over you shake my head ;
- 5 I could give you help with my mouth,
And my lips' compassion would soothe you.
Will I speak, my pain is not soothed ;
If I cease, in what am I eased ?
But now he hath wearied me sore :
Thou hast wasted all of my house ;
And hast seized me—it was for a witness ;
And against me my leanness arose,
To my face it accused.
- His anger tore, and He fought me ;
He gnashed upon me His teeth :
My foe whets His eyes against me.
- 10 They opened against me their mouths ;
My cheeks they shamefully smote :
They fill up their ranks against me.
God doth give me over to fools,
And hurls me to hand of the wicked.
Secure was I, and He crushed me ;
He seized on my neck, then He brake me,
And He set me up for His mark.
His archers encompass me round,
He cleaveth my loins and spares not,
He poureth my gall on the ground,
He breaks me with breach upon breach.

- He runs like a warrior upon me.
15 Sackcloth I sewed o'er my skin,
And defiled my horn in the dust ;
My face hotly glows from my weeping,
On my eyelashes lieth deep shade :
Though wrong there is not in my palms,
And my supplication is pure.
O earth, do not cover my blood,
And be there no place for my cry !
E'en now, behold, in heaven my witness,
In the heights my affiant !
20 My friends are my mockers ;
To Elóah my eye doth weep,
To decide for a man by Elóah,
For the son of man 'gainst his friend.
For very few years will come,
And a way I shall go once for all.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY spirit is broken,
My days are extinct,
The graveyard is mine.
Of a truth, there are mockings around me,
And mine eye on their quarrel must dwell !
Give a pledge, be my bail with Thyself !
Who else will strike hands with me ?
For their heart Thou hast hidden from knowl-
edge :

- Therefore Thou wilt not lift them up.
- 5 One informs against friends for a portion,
While the eyes of his own children fail.
And I'm made a byword for all,
And a thing of contempt I must be ;
So my eye from sorrow grows dim,
And my limbs are all like a shadow.
Astonished at this are the upright,
And the pure is aroused 'gainst the godless.
Yet a righteous one holds on his way,
And a man of clean hands addeth strength.
- 10 But now, come ye all again, I pray,
I shall find not a wise man among you.
 My days are passed,
 My plans cut off,
 The wealth of my heart.
The night they explain as day :
Light is nearer than manifest darkness.
If I hope for Sheól as my house,
Have spread in the darkness my couch,
Have called to the grave, Thou'rt my Father !
My mother ! my sister ! to worms :
- 15 Then where, O where is my hope ;
Yea, my hope, who shall ever behold it ?
To the bars of Sheól they go down,
When at once there is rest in the dust.

BILDAD.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

HOW long will ye lay the snares for words?

Consider, and then we will speak.

Wherefore are we held as a beast,

Accounted unclean in your eyes?

One who teareth himself in his wrath,—

Shall the earth be laid waste for thy sake,

And a rock be removed from its place?

5 Yet the light of the wicked expires,

And the flame of his fire doth not shine.

The light in his tent has grown dark,

And his lamp above him expires.

The steps of his strength are straightened,

And his own advice casts him down.

For his own feet do ensnare him,

And he walketh over the toils.

A gin layeth hold on his heel,

A noose doth fasten upon him.

10 Concealed on the ground is its cord,

And its net is hid on his path.

Fears make him afraid round about,

And scare him away, pursuing.

Hungry becometh his trouble,

And calamity waits at his side.

- There eateth the limbs of his frame,
Eats his members the first-born of death.
He is dragged from his tent, his trust;
To the king of terrors must march.
- 15 There abides in his tent what he owns not,
O'er his dwelling-place brimstone is sown.
Beneath, his roots are dried up,
And his branch is withered above.
His memory fades from the earth,
And nameless is he o'er the plain.
They drive him from light into darkness,
And thrust him out of the world.
Not a sprout has he, nor shoot in his tribe,
And there's no escaped one in his tents.
- 20 The West is amazed at his day,
And shuddering seizes the East.
Yea, these are the homes of the wicked,
And this is the godless man's place.

JOB.

CHAPTER XIX.

AND Job answered and said :

HOW long will ye weary my soul,
And crush me down with words?
Already ten times ye revile me,
Unblushingly ye deride me.

- Yet, verily, if I have erred,
With me shall my error abide.
- 5 If indeed ye will boast against me,
And will prove against me my shame ;
Then know that Elóah hath wronged me,
And me in His net hath enclosed.
Lo, I cry out, Oppression ! but am not heard ;
Call for help, but right there is none.
My way He hath hedged that I pass not,
And darkness He puts on my paths.
My glory from me He hath stripped,
And put off the crown from my head.
- 10 He destroys me all round, and I go ;
And He tears up my hope like a tree ;
And He kindles against me His wrath,
Esteems me for Him as His foes.
Together His troops come on,
And cast up against me their way,
And encamp round about my tent.
He has put my brothers far from me,
And my friends are but foreign to me.
My kinsmen have ceased,
And forgotten me they whom I knew.
- 15 They who lodge in my house, and my maids,
Esteem me as foreign,
A stranger am I in their eyes.
I call to my servant unanswered ;
With my mouth I must pray unto him.
My breath to my wife is offensive,

- And my sigh to the sons of my flesh.
Even young children despise me ;
Do I rise, then against me they speak.
All my intimate friends abhor me,
And those I have loved turn against me.
- 20 To my skin and my flesh my bone doth cleave,
I escape with the skin of my teeth.
Pity me, pity me, ye my friends !
For the hand of Elóah hath touched me.
O why pursue me like God,
And be not filled with my flesh ?
O now that my words were writ down,
O were they inscribed in the book !
With an iron pen and with lead
Forever engraved in the rock !
- 25 But I know my Redeemer doth live,
And later shall rise o'er the dust.
Then after my skin, thus beat off,
And free from my flesh, I'll see God ;
Whom I for myself shall see,
And mine eyes behold, and no stranger.
My reins pine with longing within me.
If ye say, How can we pursue him,
As the root of the thing is found in me :
Then be ye afraid of the sword ;
For a fire are sins of the sword,
That ye may know there's a judgment.

ZOPHAR.

CHAPTER XX.

AND Zophar the Naamathite answered and said :

- THEREFORE do my thoughts give me answer,
And for this is the impulse within me.
Reproof to my shame I must hear!
But the mind answers me from my insight.
Know'st thou this which is from everlasting,
From the placing of man on the earth,
5 That the joy of the wicked is brief,
And swift the delight of the godless?
Though his greatness should mount up to heaven,
And his head should attain to the clouds;
Like his dung he shall perish forever,
Who see him shall say, Where is he?
Like a dream he flies off and is found not,
Scared away as a vision of night.
Eye beheld him, but shall not again;
And his place shall see him no more.
10 His sons must appease the poor,
And his hands must give back his wealth.
His bones were full of his youth;
Now it rests with him in the dust.
If evil is sweet in his mouth,
If he hides it under his tongue,
If he spares it and lets it not loose,

And keeps it back in his throat;
His bread in his bowels is changed,
The poison of adders is in him.

- 15 Wealth he gorged, and then spewed it out;
From his belly God casteth it forth.
The adder's poison he sucks,
The tongue of the viper doth kill him.

Let him see not the brooks,
The streams, the rivers of honey and cream.
Restoring the gain, unswallowed,
As the wealth of his barter he joys not.
For he crushed, he deserted the poor;
Seized a house, but he buildeth it not.

- 20 Since he knew no rest in his greed,
With his dearest he shall not escape.
There is naught has evaded his hunger,
So his welfare shall not remain firm.
While his riches are full, he is straightened;
Every sufferer's hand comes upon him.
It shall happen, to fill up his maw,
He will send His hot anger against him,
And rain down upon him His food.
He flees from the armor of iron,
A brazen bow doth pierce him.

- 25 He pulls, it goes forth from his back,
And the glittering steel from his gall;
Terror cometh upon him.
All gloom is reserved for his treasures,
A fire not blown eats him up,

Destroys what is left in his tent.
The heavens uncover his sin,
And earth rises up against him.
Disappear shall the wealth of his house,
Washed away in the day of His wrath.
This the wicked man's portion from God,
And his dower appointed by El.

JOB.

CHAPTER XXI.

AND Job answered and said :

O HEAR with attention my speech,
And let this be your consolation.
Permit me, and I will speak,
And when I have spoken, mock on.
As for me, does my plaint concern man,
Or why should I not be impatient?
5 Turn hither to me and wonder,
And lay the hand on the mouth.
At the mere recollection I shudder,
And terror doth seize on my flesh.
Wherefore do wicked men live,
Grow old, yea, wax mighty in power?
Their seed is established with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
Their homes are secure from fear,

- And the rod of Elóah's not on them.
- 10 His bull unfailingly genders ;
His cow calves, and doth not miscarry.
They send forth their young as a flock,
And their children leap wildly for joy ;
They shout to the drum and the cithern,
And rejoice at the organ's sound ;
They spend their days in good,
And go down in a wink to Sheól.
Yet they say unto God, 'Turn from us !
And, We wish not to know of Thy paths.
- 15 What is Shaddai that Him we should serve ?
What's our profit in praying to Him ?
Lo, their fortune is not in their hand :
Far from me be the thought of the wicked !
How oft fails the lamp of the wicked,
And cometh their ruin upon them,
The lots He assigns in His wrath ?
[How often] are they as straw in the wind,
And as chaff that the storm sweeps away ?
"Elóah reserveth His pain for his sons :"
Requite him may He that he know it !
- 20 Let his own eyes behold his destruction,
Of th' Almighty's wrath let him drink !
For what recks he his house after him,
When cut off is his number of months ?
Doth any teach God understanding,
Who judgeth the heavenly ones ?
One dies in the fulness of vigor,

- Quite tranquil and free from care.
His sinews are full of fatness,
And his marrow 's refreshed in his bones.
- 25 And another dies bitter of soul,
And hath not tasted of good.
Together they lie in the dust,
And the worms do cover them both.
Behold, I perceive your thoughts,
And the plans with which ye would wrong me.
If ye say, Where's the tyrants' house?
And where is the tent where the wicked dwell?
Of travellers have ye not asked?
And their signs ye cannot despise:
- 30 That the wicked is spared in the day of woe,
Led away in the day of great wrath.
Who declares to his face his way?
And that which he does who requites him?
And he to the graveyard is borne,
And keepeth watch on a mound.
Sweet to him are the clods of the vale,
And after him goes all the world,
As before him a numberless host.
Then how would ye vainly console me,
Since your answers—malice remains?

THE THIRD CYCLE OF THE POEM.

ELIPHAZ.

CHAPTER XXII.

AND Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said :

CAN a man be of profit to God ?

Nay, a wise one will profit himself.

Doth th' Almighty win aught when thou'rt just,

Or get gain when thou livest uprightly ?

Because of thy fear doth He chide thee,

Doth He come into judgment with thee ?

5 Is not thy wickedness great,

And are not thy sins without end ?

For thou pledgedst thy brother for naught,

And didst strip off the clothes of the needy ;

Thou gavest the thirsty no water,

And didst hold back thy bread from the hungry.

But the mighty, to him was the land,

And the eminent one dwelt therein.

Thou hast sent away widows with naught,

And the arms of the orphans were broken.

10 And so spread about thee are nets,

And fear on a sudden confounds thee.

Or dost thou not see the darkness,

And a water-flood cov'ring thee up ?

Is not God as high as the heavens ?

- See the head of the stars,— how high !
And thou sayest, What knoweth God ?
Can He execute right through the gloom ?
Clouds are His veil, that He see not,
And He walks in the heavenly vault.
- 15 Wilt thou keep the pathway of old,
Which men of wickedness trod ;
Who were snatched untimely away,
Their foundation poured forth in a stream ;
Who said unto God, Turn from us !
And what could th' Almighty do for them ?
Yet he filled up their houses with good :
“ Far from me be the thought of the wicked ! ”
The righteous behold, and are glad,
And the innocent laughs them to scorn :
- 20 “ Of a truth our foe is cut off,
And their wealth has a fire devoured.”
O, deal friendly with Him, and have peace :
By this shall good come upon thee.
Take now from His mouth instruction,
And lay up His words in thy heart.
If thou turn unto Shaddai, thou'lt prosper ;
If thou put from thy tent perverseness.
And put in the dust thine ore,
And Ophir mid stones of the brook :
- 25 Th' Almighty shall then be thine ore,
And glittering silver for thee.
For in Shaddai shalt thou then delight,
And shalt lift up thy face unto God.

When thou prayest to Him, He will hear thee;
And thou shalt fulfil thy vows.
When thou plannest a thing, it succeeds;
And over thy paths shineth light.
When they sink, thou wilt say, Be lift up!
And the lowly of eyes He will save;
30 He will save one not guiltless,
And save by thy cleanness of hands.

JOB.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AND Job answered and said:

E'EN to-day my complaint is defiant,
Though my hand lieth hard on my sigh.
O that I knew where to find Him,
Could come even unto His place!
I would order before Him the suit,
And my mouth with defences would fill.
5 I would know the words of His answer,
Would perceive what He'd say unto me.
Will He strive in great power with me?
Nay, but He will rather regard me.
Then a just man would reason with Him,
And for aye from my Judge I'd escape.
Lo, eastward I go, He's not there,
And westward, I do not observe Him;

- To the north, when He works, I discern not,
He hides in the south, and I see not.
- 10 For He knoweth the way with me ;
Should He try me, as gold I'd come forth.
My foot has cleaved fast to His step,
His way I have kept without turning,
The command of His lips, and swerved not.
More than my own resolution
I laid up the words of His mouth.
Yet He is the same ; and who stays Him ?
If His soul has wished aught, then He does it.
For He will perform my decree ;
And like these there are many things with Him.
- 15 Therefore I am frightened at Him ;
I reflect, and before Him I fear.
So God hath softened my heart,
And Shaddai hath made me afraid ;
For I am not hushed 'fore the darkness,
Nor before myself gloom-concealed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEREFORE are not times by th' Al-
mighty reserved,
And why see not His friends His days ?
Men move away bounds,
They seize on a flock, and feed it ;
They drive off the ass of the orphans,
They pledge the ox of the widow ;

- They thrust the poor from the road ;
All concealed are the meek of the land.
- 5 Lo, wild asses in the waste, they go forth
In their labor of seeking for prey.
The steppe yields him bread for the young,
In the field they cut each his fodder,
And the wicked man's vineyard they glean.
Naked they lodge, without garment,
And no covering have in the cold.
They drip with the rain of the mountains,
And shelterless cling to a rock.
Men tear from the breast an orphan,
And they pledge what the needy has on.
- 10 Naked they go, without garment,
And famishing take up the sheaves.
Between their walls they make oil,
They tread in the wine fats, and thirst.
From the city the dying cry out,
And the soul of the pierced pleads for help,
But Elóah regards not the folly.
These belong to the haters of light,
They have not regarded its ways,
And have not dwelt in its paths.
At light the murderer riseth ;
He killeth the wretched and poor,
And at night he becomes like a thief.
- 15 The adulterer's eye waits for dusk ;
He thinketh, No eye shall behold me,
And he putteth a mask on his face.

In the darkness men break into houses ;
By day they shut themselves up.
They are not acquainted with light,
For morn is thick gloom to them all,
Since man knoweth the terrors of blackness.
He is swift on the face of the waters, [say you,]
Accursed is his portion on earth,
He shall turn not the way of the vineyards.
Drought, also heat, the snow waters consume ;

Sheol those that sin.

20

The womb forgets him,

The worm feeds on him,

Remembered is he no more ;
And broken is sin like a tree,
He who robbed the barren that bare not,
And did to the widow no good.
Yet the mighty by might He preserveth ;
He stands up, not believing in life.
He calms him, and he is sustained,
And His eyes are upon their ways.
They are high a moment, then gone ;
They sink, they perish like all,
And they fade as the top of the stalk.
If not, who will give me the lie,
And bring to nothing my words.

BILDAD.

CHAPTER XXV.

AND Bildad the Shuhite answered and said :

DOMINION and fear are with Him,
Who maketh peace in His heights.
Is there of His troops any number,
And o'er whom doth not His light rise ?
How can man be just before God,
How the woman-born one be pure ?

5 Lo, even the moon shines not brightly,
And the stars are not clean in His eyes,
Much less is frail man, a crawler !
And the son of man, a worm !

JOB.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AND Job answered and said :

HOW hast thou strengthened weakness,
Supported the powerless arm ?
How hast thou counseled unwisdom,
And knowledge in fullness made known ?
To whom hast thou made known words,
And whose breath has gone out from thee ?

- 5 The shades suffer pain
Beneath the sea and its dwellers.
Sheól is naked before Him,
And no covering hath the abyss.
He spreads out the north o'er the waste,
Suspendeth the earth over chaos.
In His thick clouds He shuts up the waters,
Yet a cloud is not broken beneath them.
He encloseth the front of the throne,
He spreadeth upon it His cloud.
- 10 A circle He drew on the waters
To the last ray of light near the darkness.
The pillars of heaven do quake
And shudder at His rebuke.
In His might He exciteth the sea ;
By His knowledge He shattereth Rahab.
By His breath are the heavens made bright ;
His hand the flying dragon hath pierced.
Lo, these are the ends of His ways ;
But what a mere murmur we hear,
And the roar of His great strength who knows ?

CHAPTER XXVII.

AND Job continued his sententious discourse
and said :

AS God lives, who deprives me of right,
And th' Almighty, who vexes my soul—

- For all of my life is still in me,
And Elóah's breath in my nostril—
My lips do not speak perverseness,
And my tongue doth not utter deceit.
- 5 Far be it from me to justify you !
Till I die I will not let my innocence go !
I cleave to my right, nor loose it ;
My heart chides no one of my days.
My foe shall become as the wicked,
And my enemy as the perverse.
For what hope has the bad, when cuts off,
When draws out Elóah his soul ?
His cry for help doth God hear,
When cometh upon him distress ?
- 10 Will he in th' Almighty delight,
Will he call upon God at all times ?
I will teach you as touching God's hand,
I'll not hide what is with th' Almighty.
Behold, ye have all of you seen,
And why are ye utterly vain ?
This is the wicked man's lot before God,
And the portion that tyrants get from the Al-
mighty.
- If his sons increase, they're the sword's ;
And his seed are not sated with bread.
- 15 His remnant are buried by death,
And as for his widows, they weep not.
Though he heapeth up silver as dust,
And raiment prepareth as clay ;

He prepares, but the righteous doth wear it,
And his silver the innocent shares.
He has built as a moth his house,
As a booth that a watchman hath made,
He lieth down rich, but not twice ;
He has opened his eyes, and is gone.
20 'Terrors o'ertake him like waters,
A storm bears him off in the night.
East wind lifts him up, and he goes,
And it sweeps him away from his place.
And He hurls upon him unsparing ;
From His hand he would utterly flee.
Men clap their hands at him,
And hiss him forth from his place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOR there is a vein for the silver,
And a place for the gold, which they fine.
From the dust is iron obtained,
And a stone is fused into brass.
Man has bounded the darkness,
And to all completeness he searcheth
The stone of gloom and thick darkness.
Man hath broken a shaft away from the dweller,
Those who by the foot were forgotten ;
They hung far from mortals, they swung.
5 The earth, out of it cometh bread ;
But its depth is o'eturned as with fire ;

- The sapphire's place is its stones,
And in it are nuggets of gold.
A path which the hawk hath not known,
And the vulture's eye hath not spied ;
The sons of might have not trod it,
There has passed not upon it a lion.
On the flint man has put forth his hand,
He has wholly subverted the mountains.
- 10 Canals he hath cut in the rocks,
And his eye has seen everything precious.
He has bound fast the rills from triekling,
And so bringeth to light what is hid.
But wisdom, from whence is it found,
And where now is insight's abode ?
Its value frail man has not known,
'Tis not found in the land of the living.
The deep said, In me it is not,
And the sea said, It is not with me.
- 15 Fine gold is not given in its stead,
Nor is silver paid out as its price.
It is weighed not for Ophir's pure gold,
For the onyx of price and the sapphire.
Gold and glass are not equal to it,
Nor are vessels of gold its exchange.
Unthought of are corals and crystal :
To have wisdom is better than pearls.
Not like it the topaz of Cush,
It is not weighed out for fine gold.
- 20 Yea, wisdom, from whence doth it come,

And where now is insight's abode?
It is veiled from the eyes of all living,
And hid from the fowl of the sky.
Destruction and death have said,
With our ears we have heard of its fame.
God has observed its way,
And He hath known its abode.
For He, to the ends of the earth He beholds,
Beneath the whole heaven He sees,
25 To make a weight for the wind,
While the water He fixes by measure.
When He made for the rain a decree,
And a path for the bolts of the thunder;
Then He saw it, and published it forth;
Set it up, and fathomed it also.
And he said unto man :
Lo, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom,
And turning from evil is insight.

THE SOLILOQUY OF JOB.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AND Job continued his sententious discourse
and said :

- HAD I like the months of the past,
Like the days when Elóah watched o'er me !
When His lamp still shone on my head,
By His light I walked in the darkness : —
As I was in the days of my prime,
When God's counsel was over my tent,
5 While yet th' Almighty was with me,
Around me my children ;
When my steps were bathing in cream,
And the rock pouring rivers of oil at my side.
When I went tow'rd the gate to the city,
In the market erected my seat ;
The young men beheld me, and hid,
And the old men arose, they stood.
The princes were chary of words,
And the palm they laid on their mouth.
10 The voice of noble ones ceased,
And their tongue clave fast to their throat.
Whene'er the ear heard, then it blessed me ;
And the eye, when it saw, bare me witness.
For I rescued the poor, crying out,
The orphan, and him who was helpless.
The wretched one's blessing came on me,

- And I gladdened the heart of the widow.
I put on justness ; it clothed me :
My right was as mantle and turban.
- 15 Eyes I was to the blind,
And feet to the lame was I.
A father was I to the poor,
And a suit which I knew not, that searched I.
I shattered the jaws of the sinner,
And plucked out the prey from his teeth.
And I said, In my nest I shall die,
And shall multiply days like the phoenix.
To the waters my root will lie bare,
And dew pass the night on my branch ;
- 20 My glory still fresh will be with me,
And my bow will grow young in my hand.
Men listened to me, and waited,
And they heard my counsel in silence.
They replied not after my word,
And on them dropped gently my speech ;
And they waited for me as for rain,
And their mouth for the harvest-rain opened.
I gave them a smile when despondent,
And they made not my cheerful face sad.
- 25 I sought out their way, and presided,
And I throned as a king in the troops,
As one who comforteth mourners.

CHAPTER XXX.

- BUT now they do laugh me to scorn
Who are younger in days than myself,
Whose fathers I should have abhorred
To set with the dogs of my flock.
And the strength of their hands, what to me,
Since for them robustness has perished?
By want and hunger made lean,
Who fly to the waste,
To the darkness of desert and waste;
Who pluck at the bushes salt-purslane,
And the broom-plant's root is their bread.
- 5 They are driven from men;
They are shouted at as a thief.
They must dwell in the gorges most dreadful,
In holes of the earth and of rocks.
In the midst of bushes they groan,
Beneath the sharp thorn they are huddled.
Fools' sons, yea, sons without name,
They are scourged away out of the land.
And now their ditty am I,
And I am a by-word for them!
- 10 They scorn me, far from me they stand,
And spare not my face the spittle.
For my cord He hath loosed and debased me;
So they cast off before me the bridle.
On my right hand the brood riseth up;
They have cast at my feet,

And have thrown up against me their ruinous
ways.

They demolished my path,
They help on my fall,
Themselves being helpless.

As through a wide fissure they come,
They roll themselves on with a crash.

- 15 Against me terrors are turned ;
My honor they chase as the wind,
And my help has gone by like a cloud.
And now within me my soul is poured out,
Sad days seize on me.

Night pierces my bones, that they fall from me,
And my sinews do not obtain rest.
By great might is my garment disfigured,
Like the neck of my tunic it clasps me.

In the mire He hast cast me,
And like dust and ashes am I.

- 20 I cry unto Thee unanswered ;
I stand, and Thou lookest upon me.
Thou'rt changed toward me to a tyrant :
With strong hand Thou dost persecute me,
Thou dost mount me on wind, mak'st me ride.
And dost let me dissolve into storm.
For I know Thou wilt bring me to death,
And the house for all living appointed.
Yet, when falling, man throws out the hand ?
In his ruin, because of it, cries out ?
25 Or have I not wept for th' oppressed ;

THE POETRY OF JOB.

Has not my soul grieved for the poor ?
 When I waited for good, evil came ;
 When I looked for the light, came the gloom.
 My bowels do boil without ceasing ;
 Days of affliction befall me.
 A mourner I roam without sun ;
 I rise in th' assembly, I cry out.
 A brother am I unto jackals,
 And a friend to the daughters of wailing.
 30 My skin groweth black, and falls off,
 And my bones do burn from the heat.
 So my cithern is turned into weeping,
 And my pipe to the voice of mourners.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A LEAGUE I have formed for my eyes,
 And how should I look on a maid ?
 And what is God's portion from heaven,
 Th' Almighty's lot from the heights ?
 Is not woe for the wicked,
 And ruin for doers of evil ?
 My ways doth not He behold,
 And doth He not count all my steps ?
 5 If I with falsehood have walked,
 And my foot hasted after deceit—
 Let Him weigh me in righteous scales,
 That Elóah my virtue may know !
 If my step turned aside from the way,

- And my heart followed after my eyes,
 And a blemish did cleave in my palm ;
 Let me sow, and another one eat,
 And my shoots, let them be rooted up.
 If my heart was befooled for a woman,
 And I lurked at the door of my friend ;
 10 Then let my wife grind for another,
 And above her let others bow down.
 For that is a shame,
 And that is a crime for the judges.
 For, a fire, it eats to the pit,
 And in all of my wealth 't would work ruin.
 If I scorned my servant's right
 And my maid's in their trouble with me ;
 'Then what should I do in case God should arise,
 And should He examine, how answer I Him ?
 15 Did not He who made me in the womb make him,
 And us did not One in the bosom create ?
 If the wish of the poor I refused,
 And the eyes of the widow let fail,
 And ate up my morsel alone,
 While an orphan partook not of it—
 From my youth he revered me as father,
 From my mother's womb I led her ;—
 If I saw a perishing one, without dress,
 And no covering for the poor—
 20 In truth, his loins have blessed me,
 From the fleece of my lambs he was warmed ;—
 If I shook o'er an orphan my hand,

- When I saw in the gate my support ;
Let my shoulder-blade drop from its neck,
And my arm be wrenched from its bone ;
For a terror to me is God's bane,
And before His highness I'm weak.
If gold I have made my support,
And to fine gold have said, O my trust !
25 If I joyed that my wealth was great,
And my hand had acquired much goods ;
If I saw the light when it shone,
And the moon in majesty moving ;
If my heart became foolish in secret,
And I threw [unto them] a kiss :
This too were a crime for the judges,
For to God above I had lied.
If I joyed in the hurt of my hater,
Sprang up when calamity found him—
30 But I gave not my mouth to sin
By asking his soul with a curse ;—
If the men of my tent have not said,
Who can show one not filled from his food ?
A stranger lodged not in the street,
I opened my doors to the way ;
If I hid as a man my transgression,
That my guilt I concealed in my breast,
Because I feared the great throng,
And the scorn of the clans made me shake,
That I hushed, went not out at the door—
35 O had I some one to hear me !

Lo, my mark ! Answer me the Almighty !
And [had I] the book my opponent has writ !
Of a truth, on my back I would bear it,
I would bind it on me, a dear crown.
I would tell him the sum of my steps,
As a prince I would come near to him.
If against me my acre cried out,
And together its furrows did weep ;
If I ate up its strength without pay,
And blew out the life of its lord ;
Then for wheat let the thorns spring forth,
And instead of the barley rank weeds.

THE WORDS OF JOB ARE ENDED.

ELIHU.

CHAPTER XXXII.

INTRODUCTION OF ELIHU.

AND so these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. And the anger of Elihu was kindled, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram. Against Job was his anger kindled, because he had justified himself rather than God; and against his three friends was his anger kindled, because they had not found an answer and condemned Job. And Elihu had waited for Job with words, because they were 5] older than he in days. And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men, then his anger was kindled.

And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said :

LITTLE am I in days,
And ye are old;
Hence fearful was I and afraid
To show my opinion to you.
I said to myself, days should speak,
And abundance of years make known wisdom.

- Yet it is the spirit in man,
And th' Almighty's breath that instructs them.
Not the great in days are wise,
Nor are elders acquainted with judgment.
- 10 So I say, O listen to me ;
I will make known my thought, even I.
Behold, for your words I waited,
For your sensible speech I gave ear,
Until ye should search out words ;
And I gave careful heed unto you :
But, lo, none confuteth Job,
Not one of you answers his words.
Say not ye, We have come upon wisdom !
God can put him to flight, not man !
Since he ordered against me no words,
I shall answer him not with your terms.
- 15 They are frightened, they answer no more,
Departed from them are words.
And am I to wait when they speak not,
When they stop, when they answer no more ?
I will answer my part, even I ;
Even I will make known my opinion,
Because I am full of words ;
The spirit within me incites me.
Behold, my breast is like wine that's not vented,
It is ready to burst like new flasks.
- 20 I will speak that myself I may ease,
I will open my lips and reply.
Indeed, I'll be partial to no man,

Nor to man speak flattering words.
For I do not know how to flatter ;
In a trice would my Maker remove me.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

- BUT prithee, O Job, my discourses hear,
And give ear unto all of my words.
Lo, now I have opened my mouth ;
My tongue in my throat has spoken.
My words are the truth of my heart,
And the ken of my lips, distinctly they speak.
The Spirit of God hath made me,
And th' Almighty's breath gives me life.
- 5 If thou hast the power, refute me :
Prepare, take thy stand before me.
Lo, I stand unto God as thou dost ;
From the clay was I also cut off.
Lo, my fear shall not make thee afraid,
Nor my stroke be heavy upon thee.
But thou hast said in my ears,
And the sound of the words I perceived :
Clean am I without sin, I am guiltless,
And there is no iniquity in me.
- 10 Lo, He findeth out charges against me,
He esteems me a foe to Himself.
He putteth my feet in the stocks,
He watcheth all of my paths.

Lo, in this thou'rt not just, I reply unto thee ;
For Elóah is more than frail man.
Why hast thou contended with Him,
That He answers not all of man's [his] words ?
But no, God doth speak at one time,
And twice : man observeth it not.

- 15 In a dream, a vision of night,
When falleth deep sleep upon men,
In slumberings deep on the couch ;
Then doth He uncover men's ear,
And puts on their warning a seal,
To turn man away from the deed,
And pride to conceal from a man ;
To hold back his soul from the pit,
And his life from a plunge on a spear.
And by pains on his couch he is chastened,
While the strife of his bones is unceasing.

- 20 And his life makes bread foul to him ;
And his soul, his favorite food.
His flesh disappeareth from sight,
And his wasted limbs are scarce seen ;
And his soul draweth near to the pit,
And his life unto those who destroy.
If there be an angel for him,
Intercessor, one out of a thousand,
To declare his duty to man ;
Then pities He him, and doth say,
Save him from descent to the pit,
I have found a ransom.

- 25 His flesh is made tender with youth ;
He returns to his boyhood's days.
He prays unto God, He accepts him,
And he looks on His face with delight :
So he gives man his righteousness back.
He singeth to people and saith,
I had sinned and perverted the upright,
But it was not requited to me.
He rescued me from descent to the pit,
And my life doth feast upon light.
Behold, all of this will God do,
Twice, thrice with a man,
- 30 To bring back his soul from the pit,
Make it shine with the light of life.
Attend, O Job, give me heed ;
Keep silence and I will speak.
But if there are words, answer me ;
Speak thou, for I wish thine acquittal.
If none, do thou listen to me :
Hush, and I will impart to thee wisdom.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AND Elihu answered and said :

O HEARKEN, ye wise, to my words,
And give ear unto me, ye that know ;
For the ear examineth words
As the palate tasteth in eating.

- The right let us prove for ourselves,
Among us discern what is good.
- 5 For Job has said, I am guiltless,
And God has removed my right;
In spite of my right I must lie;
Full of pain is my wound without sin.
 Who's a hero like Job,
Who drinketh derision as waters?
And he goes with sinners for partners,
And with wicked men he doth walk.
For he saith, It profits not man
When he stands on good terms with God.
- 10 Therefore, men of mind, hearken to me:
Far be it that God should be wicked,
 Th' Almighty sinful!
For man's doing he pays back to him,
And after man's path lets him find.
Yea, truly, God doeth not mischief,
And th' Almighty perverteth not right.
Who entrusted to him the earth,
And who hath fixed all the world?
Should He set His heart on Himself,
Should gather to Him His spirit and breath;
- 15 All flesh would expire together,
And man would go back to the dust.
And understand, hear thou this,
Give ear to the voice of my words.
E'en a hater of right, can he rule?
Or wilt thou condemn the most Righteous?

- Who saith to a king, Worthless one!
O wicked one! unto princes;
Who accepts not the person of princes,
Nor preferreth the rich to the poor,
For His handiwork are they all.
- 20 In a moment they die, and at midnight
A people are stirred, and they vanish;
And the strong are deposed, not with hands.
For His eyes are upon a man's ways,
And all of his steps He doth see:
No darkness is there, and no blackness,
Where doers of evil can hide.
For He doth not regard a man still,
That he come unto God in the judgment.
He breaketh the mighty unsearched,
And others He sets in their stead.
- 25 So He recognizeth their doings,
And subverts at night, and they 're crushed.
He punishes them as the wicked,
In the place of beholders,
They who turned from Him to this end,
And did not regard all His ways,
To bring him the plaint of the poor,
That He hear the cry of the lowly.
When He calms, who then can condemn?
When He covers His face, who behold Him?
As well o'er a race as a man;
- 30 That impious men may not rule,
Nor snares of the people.

For has anyone said unto God,
I atone without doing wrong ;
Beside what I can see, do Thou teach me ;
Have I sinned, I will do it no more ?
To thy mind will He pay back thy mocking,
So that thou must choose, and not I ?
Now what thou dost know, speak out.
Men of mind will say unto me,
And the wise man who listens to me,
35 Job talketh without understanding,
And his words are not with insight.
Would that Job might be tried to the utmost,
For his answers like those of the wicked !
For he adds to his sin transgression ;
 Among us he mocks,
And makes big his words unto God.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AND Elihu answered and said :

DOST thou hold this for just that thou saidst,
My righteousness more is than God's ?
That thou sayest, What profits it thee ?
What avails it more than my sin ?
I will make thee an answer with words,
And thy companions with thee.

- 5 Behold the heavens, and look,
And see the light clouds, they are higher than
thou.
Dost thou sin, how affectest thou Him?
Grow thy faults, what dost thou unto Him?
If righteous, what givest thou Him,
Or what doth He take from thy hand?
For a man like thyself is thy sin,
And thy right for the son of a man.
For the many wrongs men cry out,
Call for help from the arm of the strong ;
- 10 But one has not said, where's Elóah, my Maker,
Who giveth glad songs in the night ;
Who instructs us more than earth's beasts,
Makes us wiser than fowl of the sky?
Then they cry, but He answereth not,
Because of the pride of the wicked.
Only vanity God doth not hear,
And th' Almighty considers it not :
Much less when thou sayest, thou seest Him not,
Before Him is the cause, and thou waitest for it!
- 15 And now since his anger has not chastised,
So " He does not mark sin very well ! "
But Job opens his mouth for naught ;
And multiplies words without knowledge.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AND Elihu answered and said :

- WAIT a little for me, and I'll teach thee ;
For still there are words for Elóah.
I will bring my knowledge from far,
And righteousness give to my Maker.
For surely my words are no lie ;
One perfect in knowledge is with thee.
5 Lo, mighty is God, but not scornful,
Mighty in power of mind.
He preserves not the life of the wicked,
But the right of the poor he performs.
He withdraws not His eyes from the righteous,
And even with kings on the throne
He sets them for aye, and they're high.
And when they are bound with chains,
Held fast in the bonds of affliction,
And He shows unto them their work,
And their sins, that great they are grown,
10 And He opens their ear to correction,
And bids them from evil return :
If they hear and render obedience,
They pass their days in good,
And their years in delight.
But if they hear not, then they run on a spear.
And breathe out their life without knowledge.

- And the godless of heart cherish wrath ;
They cry not for help when He binds them.
So their soul must die in youth,
And their life be as that of the lustful.
- 15 The patient He saves by his patience,
And opens their ear by oppression.
And enticed thee from trouble's mouth
Has a broad, unlimited place,
And thy table's supply full of fat.
And thou'rt full of a wicked man's sentence ;
Sentence and right cling fast.
For beware lest anger mislead thee by fulness,
And let not great ransom beguile thee.
Will He order thy cry without need,
And all the exertions of might ?
- 20 Long not for the night,
That nations may rise in their place.
Take heed, turn not unto sin,
For this thou preferrest to pain.
Lo, God doth exalt by His might ;
Who giveth instruction like Him ?
Who prescribed unto Him His way,
And who said, Thou doest perverseness ?
Take heed that His work thou exalt,
Which men have praised in song.
- 25 All men gaze fondly upon it,
The mortal beholds it from far.
Lo, God is high o'er our knowledge,
The sum of His years, there's no searching.

For He draws down the drops of water,
They trickle as rain for His mist.
With them the high clouds overflow,
They distill upon many a man.
Yea, knows man the unfoldings of clouds,
The great crash of His tent?
30 Lo, He spreadeth upon Him His light,
And He covers the roots of the sea.
For through them He judgeth the nations,
He giveth abundance of food.
He covers his palms o'er with light,
And commands it against the foe.
His thunder maketh Him known,
E'en the herd declares His advance.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AT this, too, my heart is afraid,
And it springs from its place.
O listen well to the crash of His voice,
And the rumble that goes from His mouth.
Beneath the whole heaven He sends it,
And His light to the ends of the earth.
Behind it roareth a voice,
Would He crash with voice majestic;
And He hinders them not should His voice be
heard.

- 5 God crasheth amazingly with his voice,
He doeth great things past our knowledge.
For He saith to the snow, Fall earthward !
 And the pouring rain,
The pouring rains of His might.
He seals up the hand of each man,
That all men of His work may learn knowledge.
And the beast enters into the lair,
In its dwelling-place abides.
The hurricane comes from the chamber,
And from the scatterers cold.
- 10 By the breath of God there is ice,
And the breadth of the waters is straightened.
Yea, richly He loadeth His cloud,
Disperseth the cloud of His light ;
And it turneth itself about by His steering,
To do whate'er He commands it
On the face of th' inhabited earth,
If as a rod, when His earth needs that,
Or as mercy, He cause it to come.
Give ear unto this, O Job ;
Stand up, and carefully mark
The wonderful things of God.
- 15 Dost thou know when God gives them a message,
And the light of His cloud makes to shine ?
Dost thou know of the poisings of clouds,
Great things of One perfect in knowledge ?
O thou whose garments are warm
When the earth with the south wind is sultry,

Dost thou stretch out with Him the clear sky,
As firm as a molten mirror?
Make us know what to say unto Him ;
We can order no words for the darkness.
20 Shall one tell Him that I would speak ?
Has one said he would be swallowed up ?
And now men behold not the light ;
It is bright in the lofty clouds,
And a wind passing by sweeps them off.
Out of the north cometh gold,
O'er Elóah is terrible splendor.
The Almighty, we find Him not, lofty in strength ;
But He humbles not judgment, nor fulness of
right.
For this do men revere Him,
He heeds none wise in heart.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS AND JOB'S ANSWERS.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AND Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind and said :

- WHO now is darkening counsel
By words that are void of knowledge?
Up! Gird thy loins like a man;
I will ask thee, and make me to know.
Where wast thou when I founded the earth?
Declare, if thou hast understanding.
- 5 Who has fixed its extent, that thou knowest,
Or who has stretched o'er it a line?
On what were its pedestals sunk,
Or the stone of its corner who laid,
When the stars of the dawn sang together,
And shouted all children of God?
And who shut up the sea with doors,
When it burst through, came forth from the
womb;
- When I made a cloud its garment,
And darkness its swaddling bands;
- 10 And brake up against it my bound,
And appointed a bar and doors;
And said, Thus far may'st thou come, but no
further,

- And here be a bound for the pride of thy waves!
Hast thou ever commanded a morning?
Hast shown to a dawning its place,
To lay hold of the corners of earth,
That thence may be shaken the wicked?
It changes like signet-clay,
So that things appear as a garment.
- 15 And their light is withdrawn from the wicked,
And shattered the arrogant arm.
Hast thou gone to the springs of the sea,
And walked in the depth of the deep?
Have death's gates been uncovered to thee,
And the gates of deep gloom canst thou see?
Hast observed to the ends of earth?
Declare, if thou knowest it all.
Which is the way to light's dwelling,
And the darkness, which is its place?
- 20 That unto its bound thou couldst bring it,
And perceivest the paths of its house.
Thou knowest, for then thou wast born,
And great is the sum of thy days!
Hast thou come to the storehouse of snow,
And the storehouse of hail canst thou see,
Which I save for the time of distress,
For the day of encounter and war?
Which is the way thither where light is divided,
Where the east wind spreads out o'er the earth?
- 25 Who cleaveth a course for the rain,
And a path for the bolt of the thunders?

- To give rain on a land without men,
On a desert in which no man lives ;
To satisfy desert and waste,
And to make the meadow bloom forth.
Is there for the rain a father,
Or who doth beget the dew-drops ?
From whose womb doth the ice come forth,
And who bears the hoar-frost of the skies ?
30 Like a stone are the waters congealed,
And the face of the deep groweth firm.
Canst thou bind fast the Pleiades' bands,
Or loosen the cords of Orion ?
Bring forth at their time the Stations,
And the Bear with her young canst thou lead ?
Dost thou know the decrees of the sky,
Or canst fix its dominion on earth ?
Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,
So that waters shall cover thee richly ?
35 The lightnings canst send, that they go
And say unto thee, Behold us !
Who placed in the cloud-depths wisdom,
Or gave to the seen cloud insight ?
Who can count the thin clouds in wisdom,
And who pour out the flasks of the skies,
When the dust melteth into a mass,
And the clods cleave fast to each other ?
Canst thou hunt for the lioness prey,
And the young lions' appetite sate,
40 When they crouch in their lurking-places,

When they lie in wait in the lair ?
Who prepares for the raven his food,
When his young cry aloud unto God,
When they wander around without food ?

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DOST thou know when the rock-goats bring
forth ?

The travail of hinds canst thou mark ?
Canst thou count the months they fulfill,
And the time when they bear dost thou know ?
They crouch, let their young break forth,
Their pangs they cast off.
Their young become strong, they grow up in the
field ;

They go forth, and return not again.

- 5 Who has sent the wild ass away free,
And the bands of the fleet one hath loosed ?
To whose house I have made the waste place,
And the desert of salt his abode.
He doth laugh at the din of the town,
The noise of the driver he hears not.
The mountains' choice spots are his pasture,
And for every green thing he doth seek.
Is the wild ox willing to serve thee,
Will he pass the night at thy crib ?
10 Canst thou bind the wild ox to the ridge with
his cord,

Or harrow the valleys behind thee will he ?
Dost thou trust him since great is his strength,
And committest thy labor to him ?
Dost thou trust him to gather thy seed,
And bring to thy floor ?

- The wing of the ostrich waves gladly :
Is't a gentle feather and pinion ?
Nay, she leaveth her eggs to the earth,
And warmeth them on the dust ;
15 She forgets that a foot may crush them,
May trample them beasts of the field.
She treats harshly her young, as not hers ;
Is her labor in vain, she cares not ;
For wisdom God made her forget,
And gave her no dower in insight.
When she beateth her pinions on high,
She doth laugh at the horse and his rider.
Canst thou give to the charger strength ?
Canst thou mantle his neck with trembling ?
20 Canst thou cause him to leap as a locust ?
A dread is his neighing majestic.
He stamps in the valley, and joys in his might ;
To meet the armed host he goes forth.
He laugheth at fear unamazed,
And turneth not back from the sword.
Upon him the quiver doth rattle,
The glittering lance and spear.
With stamping and anger he swallows the earth,
And stays not when soundeth the trumpet.

- 25 He saith when it soundeth, Aha!
And from far he scenteth the battle,
The princes' shout and the war-cry.
Doth the hawk spread his wings by thine insight,
His pinions stretch out for the south?
Or soars, at thy bidding, the eagle,
And buildeth his eyrie on high?
He dwells on the rock, and doth lodge
On the crag of the rock and stronghold.
From thence he doth spy out food,
His eyes can behold from afar.
- 30 And his brood quaff blood,
And where carcasses are, there is he.

CHAPTER XL.

AND Jehovah answered Job and said :

SHALL there strive with the Almighty a
chider?

Answer that let Elôah's rebuker!

AND Job answered Jehovah and said :

BEHOLD, I am small! What answer I thee?
My hand I do lay on my mouth.

- 5 I spake once, but begin not again;
And twice, but I do it no more.

AND Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

- Up! Gird thy loins like a man ;
I will ask thee, and make me to know.
Wilt thou even destroy my right,
Condemn me, thyself to make just?
Or hast thou an arm such as God's,
With a voice like Him canst thou thunder?
- 10 Put on now splendor and highness,
In glory and majesty clothe thee.
Pour out the floods of thy wrath ;
See all that is proud, and abase it .
See all that is lofty, subdue it,
And the wicked tread down in their place ;
In the dust together conceal them,
Their face do thou hide in the gloom :
And then I, even I, will praise thee,
Because thy right hand brings thee help.
- 15 See now Behemoth that I made with thee :
He eateth grass like an ox.
Behold, in his loins is his strength,
In the cords of his belly his might.
He bendeth his tail like a cedar ;
Interlaced are the bands of his thighs.
His bones are bars of brass,
His bones like an iron rod.
The firstling is he of God's ways,
One made to apply his sword.

- 20 For mountains furnish him fodder,
While all beasts of the field play thereby.
Beneath the lotus he lies,
In seclusion of cane and swamp.
The lotus, his shade, decks him o'er,
The brook-willows encompass him round.
Lo, swelleth the stream, he's not frightened;
He is calm though a Jordan rush toward his
mouth.

In his eyes let one take him!
Let one pierce through his nose with hooks!

CHAPTER XLI.

- CANST thou draw with a hook the levia-
than,
And canst hold down his tongue with the cord?
Canst thou put a ring in his nose,
And pierce through his cheek with a thorn?
Will he multiply prayers unto thee,
Or speak to thee flattering words?
Will he make a covenant with thee,
Wilt thou take him as servant for aye?
5 Canst thou play with him as a bird,
And bind him canst thou for thy maids?
Do the fishermen bargain for him,
Among the Phœnicians divide him?

- Canst thou fill with arrows his skin,
And with fish-harpoons his head?
Put thou upon him thy hands!
The conflict remember! repeat not!
Behold, his hope has deceived;
Is he not, e'en at sight of him, prostrate?
- 10 None so bold that he rouseth him up:
And who then will stand before me?
Who first gave me, that I must repay?
Beneath the whole sky, it is mine!
I will not pass in silence his limbs,
The point of great strength, and his beauty of
frame.
- Who has laid bare the front of his garment,
Through his teeth twofold who can come?
Who has opened the doors of his face?
Round about his teeth is dread!
- 15 A pride are the bars of the shields,
Locked up with a seal most firm.
They join one unto another,
That no air between them can come.
They are fastened each one to its brother,
They cling closely and separate not.
His neezings do radiate light,
And like eyelids of dawn are his eyes.
From his mouth do torches proceed,
Sparks of fire fly out.
- 20 From his nostrils a smoke goeth forth,
As from seething kettle and reeds.

- His breath enkindleth coals,
And a flame from his mouth comes forth.
On his neck doth power abide,
And terror before him casts down.
The leaves of his flesh cleave together ;
Molten upon him they move not.
His heart is firm as a stone,
And hard as the nether mill-stone.
- 25 Of his rising strong ones are afraid,
 Through great fear they are senseless.
Doth one reach him with sword, it holds not,
Neither lance nor spear nor harpoon.
As stubble esteemeth he iron,
As wood that is rotten, brass.
A son of the bow scares him not,
Slingstones turn to stubble for him.
The bludgeons are valued as stubble,
And he laughs at the noise of the spear.
- 30 Beneath him are sharpest sherds ;
He spreads out a flail on the slime.
He makes the deep boil as a pot,
The sea he makes as a brewing.
Behind him shineth a path ;
One might think that the deep were gray hairs.
On earth there is not his equal,
 One made without fear.
Whatever is high he beholds,
Over all sons of strength he is king.

CHAPTER XLII, 1-6.

AND Job answered Jehovah and said :

I KNOW Thou canst all things perform,
And no plan is for Thee too hard.

“Who now is darkening counsel unknowing?”

So I made known my thought and not wisely,
Things too lofty for me, and I knew not.

“O listen, and I will speak ;

I will ask Thee and make me to know.”

- 5 By hearsay, of Thee I had heard,
But now hath mine eye beheld Thee :
Therefore I recant and repent
In dust and ashes.

THE EPILOGUE.

CHAPTER XLII, 7-17.

AND it came to pass after Jehovah had spoken these words unto Job, that Jehovah said unto Eliphaz the Temanite, My anger is kindled against thee and against thy two friends, because ye have not spoken truly concerning me, as has my servant Job. And now take you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go unto my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a burnt offering, and Job my servant shall pray for you; his face alone will I accept, that I may not bring upon you the dues of folly, for ye have not spoken truly concerning me, as has my servant Job. And Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shubite, Zophar the Naamathite, went and did as Jehovah had said unto them, and Jehovah accepted 10] the person of Job. And Jehovah restored the prosperity of Job, while he was praying for his friends. And Jehovah increased all that Job had possessed twofold. Then came to him all his brothers and all his sisters, and all his former acquaintances, and they ate bread with him in his house, and they pitied

him and comforted him, because of the evil which Jehovah had brought upon him. And each gave him a kesita, and each a golden ring. And Jehovah blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. [And he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. And he had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemima, and the name of the second Kezia, and the name of the third 15] Keren-Happuch.] And women were not found in all the land as beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.] Now Job lived after this one hundred and forty years, and he saw his sons and his sons' sons through four generations. And Job died old and full of days.

PART II.
INTERPRETATION OF THE POEM

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PART II.

INTERPRETATION OF THE POEM.

CHAPTER I.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF JOB.

IN the second and fourth scenes of the Prologue (Chapter i. 6-12; ii. 1-6), the poet gives us, in the conversation between Jehovah and the Adversary, the theme of his composition. After God had spoken in high praise of His servant Job, as a man "blameless and upright," the Adversary challenged Him to test this apparent piety of His servant, insinuating that it was in reality only selfishness. Job followed godliness because of the material blessings which he thus secured. Take these away, and the truth would appear: Job would renounce God. The challenge is accepted. Job is smitten with the sudden and mysterious loss of all his wealth and all his children; but he does not renounce God. On the contrary, he takes his refuge in Him.

"Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken;

The name of Jehovah be blessed!"

In the second conversation in heaven, God

again commends His servant, and says, in effect, that the Adversary has called his piety in question without ground. But Satan is not silenced. He still professes to believe that Job's piety is not genuine. Let suffering come home to him in the form of sickness: he will yet renounce God. It will be seen that the man whom Jehovah fondly believes "blameless and upright" is so in appearance only. He will sooner give up God than his own life. Satan's second challenge is accepted. He receives the desired permission, and smites Job with leprosy. The Prologue takes us one step further, and records that Job's allegiance to God still remained unshaken. But will this allegiance continue? Will the confidence of God in Job be justified? The end is not yet. Job is smitten with leprosy; and, with the increasing loathsomeness and painfulness of the dread disease, the hour may yet come when Satan's charge will be established. The Prologue leaves us in suspense. We look for further developments. ¶ If, therefore, the poem that follows is true to the Prologue, it will show that the piety of Job was indeed unselfish; that he had a loyalty to conscience from which neither friend nor foe could

cause him to err; that he had a trust in God which was able to bear the strain of utmost suffering and utmost mystery. It will show us the struggles of a man who is tried in order to refute the slander of Satan and vindicate the confidence of God. It will answer the question whether God is able to win the immovable attachment of a human soul. The Prologue has answered this question down to the hour when the bitterness of Job's losses and sufferings began to settle into his spirit; when, sitting upon the leper's ash-heap, bereft and outcast, he began to ponder his lot, and to feel the inexplicable conflict between his cherished belief and the facts of his recent experience. Here, with this inner conflict, this spiritual struggle, the poem begins.

The theme which we have thus found in the Prologue seems to be plainly the theme of the subsequent poem. For this follows the spirit of Job through its long and terrible experience until it comes out upon the uplands of a divine calm and assurance and fellowship. It is indeed a poem of victory, agreeably with the history and hints contained in the Prologue. This is its central thought. Under this, all its parts fit harmoniously together. It is a poem

of resplendent victory, for its hero, single-handed, defeats his unseen and immortal Adversary, triumphs over his well-meaning but dangerous friends, and holds his ground even when he thinks he is assaulted by God Himself. He abides by the assertion of his good conscience though the heavens seem to be warring against him.

“Behold, He will slay me: I hope not:
But my ways I will prove to his face.”

The poet establishes the fact that such a thing as unselfish piety is possible to a mortal on earth. He shows it to us, out of the furnace and in the furnace, in his hero Job. We of course bear in mind that the glimpses into God's purpose which the poet gives us in the Prologue are not given to Job himself. They are for the reader, from the poet. Job does not know that he is to fight a battle for God. He does not know that it is Satan, not God, who has brought his losses upon him. He does not know that God has such a confidence in him that He is willing to let Satan test him to the utmost. The sky is all dark to his gaze.

This theme, of which we have been speaking, is noteworthy among those chosen by great

poets for their most elaborate productions. The theme of the *Iliad* is the restoration of a Spartan woman, whom a Trojan prince had abducted. The long war that was caused by this abduction; the counsels and intrigues of gods and goddesses, who took sides with the contending parties; the valorous exploits of individual heroes during the long siege of Troy, the bitter feuds of the Greek leaders, and the sports which were mingled with the sterner scenes of war,—these furnish the poet with materials for his epic. Doubtless the theme was wisely chosen with reference to the poet's influence on his warlike people. It was a popular theme, but not a profound one. The poem based upon it has to do, essentially, with man as related to man, not as related to God; with man as a physical being, full of desires and passions, rather than as a spiritual being, with a conscience and an immortal soul.

The theme of Dante's great poem is given by him in these words: "If it shall be the pleasure of Him, through whom all things live, that my life continue somewhat longer, I hope to say of her [Beatrice] what never yet was said of any woman." The eyes of an Italian maiden were the impulse and the theme of the

Divine Comedy. But the action of the poem, lying as it does beyond the confines of the grave, does not come so near to the heart of man as does the action of the *Iliad* or of the *Æneid*. It possesses charms for the fancy and the imagination which they do not have. It has a seriousness of thought and a depth of solemn truth unknown to the poems of Virgil and Homer. But the general theme, the praise of Beatrice, is less profoundly a theme for the ages and the race than is the theme of the Hebrew bard; and the special theme of the Divine Comedy—the progress of Dante through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, up to the Primal Light,—is too speculative and too full of heathen ideas to engage permanently, to instruct or comfort the Christian soul amid the mysteries of life.

Milton, conforming to classic models, gives us the theme of his great poem in its opening lines :

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe—
Sing, heavenly Muse.”

His purpose was to

“Assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.”

This is not wholly different from the purpose of the author of Job. He also, to a certain extent, justifies the ways of God to man, for he clears the government of God of the reproach that might justly be brought against it, as it was expounded in the universal doctrine of his day. Milton's theme, however, lies further from the every-day life of men than does the theme of Job. "Paradise Lost" is, like the Hebrew poem, a story of suffering; but that suffering is not common to man. It is a historical fact, not a constantly recurring personal experience.] The theme of Job is a part of every true man's life. Every servant of God is engaged on His side in the great conflict with the forces of darkness. Satan challenges the piety of every servant of God, and endeavors to break it down. Every one is called to suffer and be strong, every one meets with mysteries on the right hand and on the left, confusing and bewildering, whose solution must be left to the future. The struggle of Job is repeated over and over again in the experience of earnest souls, though the form and conditions of it are ever changing. His experience touches our deepest life at many a point. His story, therefore, will have a living

interest as long as there is a conscience in man, and as long as a human spirit cries, out of the darkness and mystery of earth, "Oh that I knew where to find Him!"

In connection with the theme of Job, attention may be called, in passing, to the fact that this is the only one of the greater poems of history in which woman plays no part. The most famous productions of poetical genius draw much of their inspiration from the presence of woman and the passion of love. What would the *Iliad* be without Helen, Andromeecha, Brisëis, and a host of other fair women? Of how much of its beauty and power would the *Divine Comedy* be robbed, were all the visions of Beatrice stricken from it, "Whose eyes would make one happy in the fire"? What darkness would come upon the pages of Milton and Shakespeare, were their dreams of noble and beautiful women to fade and vanish? But the Hebrew poem which we are considering has won a large place in the literature of the world, although it has not availed itself of the profound motive which has added so much to the attractiveness and power of other great poetical productions.

Having spoken thus briefly cheerful and hopeful Job, we notice, in the next place, man honored and honored by the poet; not thou who loves *persona*, for the poem, though dramatic opinion intense spiritual activity of its hero and frequently animated dialogues, is not properly a fable of It is epic, rather, in structure and tone: no heroic poem in the truest sense. Excepting Satan, who appears only in the Prologue—unless we think of him as having some part in what Job's friends say,—the development of the theme is carried on by Job, his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, by Elihu and Jehovah. Job, a man advanced in years, is a wealthy and upright land-owner of Uz—an Aramaic district eastward from Palestine, traditionally and usually found in the Hauran, but located by Professor Frederick Delitzsch northeastward from Damascus. Job apparently does not belong to the chosen people; is not a Hebrew. The poem, therefore, which magnifies his character, is a monument to the author's catholic spirit. He recognized good outside of Israel; he believed that God could make a man righteous without the law and the prophets. In this respect Job is a parallel to King Melchizedek, and to Ruth the Gentile

interest as long as he is regarded, and so of the Messiah. man, and as not regarded by the poet as in of the dramatic; and it is hence concluded that I know not invented, but was handed down

In critic. With the name the poet doubtless received certain facts concerning the character and experience of Job, which formed the basis of his poem. This is the view generally accepted by scholars. Just what the facts were to which the poet had access, it is of course impossible to say, and it is also unimportant; even as, for instance, it is impossible and of no great moment to determine how much of historical fact underlies Shakespeare's "Tempest." It would be of greater interest to know who the princely spirit was from whose mind and heart the poem sprang; but even this were of little import, either for him or for us. We only know that he was an Israelite, and belonged to the Golden Age of Hebrew literature, his poem being its consummate jewel. Were he known by name, we could still honor him best by loving the truth which he taught; but this we can do equally well now, he being unknown.

Job is portrayed as of tender conscience and deep religious feeling, a man of prudence and wisdom, liberal and sympathetic, bold in his

opposition to wrong-doers, cheerful and hopeful when others are downcast,—a man honored and beloved by all. He is a man who loves the truth more than he loves his own opinion of the truth, and whose mind is consequently open and receptive. He is a man capable of profound and fiery emotion, though by no means unstable in his judgment. He is one who in the extreme hour has the courage of his convictions, and who loves the name of honor more than he fears death.

Eliphaz, the mildest in disposition and the wisest of the three friends, is not only older than they, as is proved by his speaking before them and by his richer experience, but he is also, as it would seem (Chapter xv. 10), much older than Job himself. He is an Edomite, and comes from Teman, famous for its wisdom (Jer. xlix. 7). He is profounder and gentler than his two companions, a worthy and dignified representative of a narrow doctrine. Bildad from Shuah might seem to be descended from Abraham and Keturah. His home is located indefinitely in the "east country" (Gen. xxv. 6). Bildad appeals to tradition, as Eliphaz appealed to his own experience. He is richer in thought and poetical expression

than Zophar. The latter, from the unknown city of Naamah, is more of a dogmatist and less of a poet than either Bildad or Eliphaz.

It is characteristic of all the friends, as over against Job, that, while they are not destitute of human sympathy, they soon become hard and cruel in their judgments when anyone dares to deny the validity of their reasoning. They fancy that they are already in possession of the truth, and hence they are not truth-seekers. They are all unfair in their judgment of Job, because they do not take account of the peculiar circumstances of his case. They put him on the Procrustean couch of their dogma and fit him to it, though in the process they are obliged to lop off very suggestive facts in Job's consciousness and life. They are all stubborn, not naturally but by reason of their religious pride.

Elihu, who next appears on the scene as an opponent of Job, and whose appearance emphasizes the universality of that theory of suffering which the poem overthrows, is of Aramaic origin (Gen. xxii. 21), like Job himself. He is a young man, a veritable Hotspur. He is angry at Job because he has justified himself rather than God; and angry at the friends

because they have not silenced Job. He seems to have been present as a listener from the beginning of the poem. He was not mentioned by the poet at the outset; and this may be due to the fact that he was not to appear till near the close of the poem, and then in a role of secondary importance. He is not introduced until he can speak. Consistently with his youth, and with the fact that his aroused feelings have been so long pent up—for he says that his breast is ready to burst like new flasks,—he speaks less tersely and clearly than the friends, especially at the beginning of his speech. It is also in keeping with his youthfulness that his language is often somewhat flowery, and that his bearing savors of a pretty strong self-consciousness. But if these peculiarities are all consistent with the avowed youth of Elihu, it is plainly wide of the mark when they are urged against the originality of his words. They speak for the art of the poet, and not for the theory that Elihu's part is the work of a later hand.

The remaining speaker is Jehovah, on whose discourse the poet bestows his best skill.

We turn now to the general development

of the poem. In the six picturesque and dramatic scenes of the Prologue, we are made acquainted with Job, with his sudden and mysterious afflictions, with the motives which induced God to permit these to befall him, and at last with the three friends, who are introduced seven days before the action of the poem begins. After these days of silence pass, in which Job's spirit becomes sorely troubled and perplexed by the mysteriousness of his sufferings, and in which the presence of sympathetic friends invites him to pour out his sorrow, then his noble and patient bearing of grievous losses is succeeded by the wild torrent of complaint which calls out the reproof of the friends ; and thus the poem opens.

It should be said here, that the course of the poem is determined by the belief, universal in Job's day, that the favor or anger of God may be unerringly inferred from the prosperity or adversity of the earthly lot. It was this doctrine in its most rigid form which the three friends held, and in line with which they sought to "comfort" Job. It was also his own inbred belief ; but now it is no longer possible for him to hold it. He breaks loose from it, and struggles after a better and profounder view of life.

In this struggle his only solid ground is his good conscience and a growing conviction that God must be righteous even when He seems most unrighteous. After Job's passionate ode has opened the mouths of the friends, each of them takes up the common cause against him. Job responds to the words of each in turn. Once, and again, and again, the friends seek to bring Job to their mind; though Zophar is silent when his third turn comes to speak. The friends are mild at first, and represent Job's suffering as a chastening designed for his good. Eliphaz says:

“ Lo, happy the man whom Elôah corrects,
And the Almighty's reproof do not scorn ;
For when He wounds, He binds up ;
He hurts, and His hands do heal.”

And Bildad :

“ If thou dost seek unto God,
And to the Almighty dost pray ;
If clean and upright thou art :
Yea, then will He rouse up o'er thee,
And thy righteous dwelling restore. . . .
He will yet fill thy mouth with laughter
And thy lips with the sound of joy.”

Gradually their replies become more severe, as Job, instead of yielding, persists in asserting

his innocence; and, at length, they do not shrink from charging Job with particular and grievous sins, and even declare that what has befallen him is not the full equivalent of his wickedness. Even the mild Eliphaz speaks thus in his last ode:

“Is not thy wickedness great,
And are not thy sins without end?”

To be sure, Job has been widely known as a good man, a man “without fear and without reproach”; but these facts are brushed away by the logic of the friends’ doctrine. Suffering argues sin: great suffering argues great sin. Job has unquestionably been overwhelmed with great afflictions; therefore he must have committed grave sins. He has doubtless disregarded the hungry and thirsty, he has neglected the widow and broken the orphan’s arms. He has renounced God, and has led an arrogant, self-centred life. They carry out their doctrine to the bitter end, and blacken the character of a pure man to save their narrow dogma.

As for Job, all the elements of his nature are in a state of upheaval at the beginning of the poem. His bold impeachment of the Divine righteousness, his impassioned longings for

death, and his most inconsiderate remarks concerning his friends, are to be found in his earlier replies. Sharing the belief that the godly and upright man will prosper on earth, he is brought by his good conscience and his great sufferings to the conclusion that God is unjust.

“He bruise me sore with a tempest,
And adds to my wounds without cause.”

“’Tis all one, and so I declare it :
He destroys both the blameless and wicked.
If a scourge doth suddenly slay,
The despair of the guiltless He mocks.”

“Is’t becoming in Thee to oppress,
To scorn the fine work of Thy hands,
And shine on the counsel of sinners?”

Job feels that his miseries cannot be a punishment for sin; but, if they are not, then where is the justice of God? He is not just. But there is no comfort in such a conclusion, and least of all can it satisfy the deeply religious heart of Job. He cannot give God up. There must be another side to His character. There must be a witness for Job in heaven. He knows that his deliverer lives, and some-

time, somewhere, though not on earth, he is sure of an acquittal. Job does not know how to solve the mystery of his suffering, but he gradually comes to the sublime belief that it is solvable. Not at once does he reach the conviction that he can keep his good conscience and his God also. He struggles on slowly, often confused and perplexed, often torn from his moorings by the waves of cruel suffering; but his clear conscience,

“That good companion which emboldens man
Beneath the hauberk of its feeling pure,”

emboldens him more and more. He not only does not renounce God, but he looks confidently to Him for an attestation of his innocence.

In the first cycle of the poem, Job is mainly concerned with the thought that the innocent sometimes suffer and suffer grievously. His own case is proof of this. He can say to the Lord, “Thou knowest I am not guilty.” He by no means claims that his life has been wholly free from sin. No one, he says, can bring forth a clean thing from the unclean. He speaks of the sins of his youth, and admits that God by searching can find wickedness in him now, can spy out sin. But this unpar-

alleled suffering, falling upon him, as it were, out of a clear sky, in a day when he felt that God's counsel was over his tent, this surely is not a consequence of sin. It cannot be. His heart rises up in passionate and persistent protest against the false notion of his understanding and the doctrine of his friends.

In the second cycle, while still occupied in part with the suffering of the innocent, he presents also the thought that the wicked prosper. They prosper as a class.

“They spend their days in good,
And go down in a wink to Sheol.”

Some one may say, Yes, but God will visit their children with punishment. This, however, does not at all satisfy Job. The wicked man himself should drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

“For what recks he for his house after him,
When cut off is his number of months?”

Himself is the one to suffer; but as a matter of fact, he escapes punishment. He dies in comfort; and after him — that is, after his example,

“goes all the world,
As before him a numberless host.”

He is not speaking here of a casual occurrence, but of a general rule.

In the third cycle, Job still protests his innocence, affirms that others in city and country suffer without cause, and that God prospers the wicked. He is as far as ever from justifying the friends. He still cleaves to his right, and declares that his heart does not chide one of his days. But he presents an aspect of the truth in regard to the wicked, different from that found in the last cycle. He there portrays the prosperity of the wicked; here, toward the close of his ode, he portrays their misery, (chapter xxvii.). The wicked, as a class, so he says now, are punished. If their sons increase, it is for the sword. If they gather costly raiment and heap up silver, the righteous inherit them. God hurls his judgment upon the wicked unsparingly, and sweeps them from the earth. This is the proper lot of the wicked, but it is not an invariable rule. In the last cycle, his representation was that the wicked as a class prosper. But granting, as he does in chapter xxvii., that the wicked man is destroyed as a rule, this does not help to solve his difficulties. This does not explain why a righteous man like himself should suffer.

It rather makes this seem more inexplicable. It is a ray of justice that makes the darkness of God's seeming injustice more mysterious. The problem is still as far from a solution as ever, though Job's feeling in regard to Him who is back of the problem has changed. Deep down in his heart he believes that it is the only wisdom to fear God. This is not earthly wisdom, but heavenly ; a wisdom that is not given in exchange for Ophir's pure gold. Job's lofty spiritual praise of wisdom shows that he has known her as one friend knows another. His heart is still anchored to God.

The last three chapters of Job's words (xxix.-xxxi.) we may call his Soliloquy. He no longer addresses the friends, but communes with the bright past, now vanished ; communes also with his sufferings, and with his good conscience. That past appears glorious because God was in it, an intimate friend. The bitterness of present suffering is the feeling that God has cast him into the mire, and is persecuting him. God is changed, toward him, into a tyrant. Hence it is that his cithern is turned into weeping, and his pipe to the voice of mourners. And yet within this man who feels himself a brother unto jackals and a

friend to the daughters of wailing, whose skin grows black and falls off with the progress of his disease, and whose bones burn with the heat, there is a good conscience, which makes a little heaven, as it were, in his hell. He gives utterance once more to the conviction of his innocence. As regards the accusations which his terrible sufferings seem to bring against him, he can fearlessly say that he is ready to be weighed in God's scales. He waits with longing for some answer from the Almighty.

Then Elihu speaks, not with the arguments of the friends throughout, but for the same general end. He would bring Job to a humble confession of his sins, and to an unqualified admission of the righteousness of God. He regards Job as a man "Who drinketh derision as waters." He is a mocker who makes big his words unto God. Therefore he is full of a wicked man's sentence. Elihu fails to comprehend the situation, even as the three friends had failed. He judges Job superficially. He lights upon the rash words of Job, and takes him to task for them; but he has no appreciation of the nobility of Job's spirit and life. His doctrine of sin is manifestly

the same as that of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. He differs, however, from them somewhat in his application. He has relatively less to say of Job's sins, and relatively more to say of God's gracious purpose. His aim is to justify God, rather than to condemn Job. He has less of dogmatic hatred, and more of intellectual ambition. He wishes it to be seen that there are still words for Elóah, that the friends have not said all that can be said for Him. His best effort is made in showing that a moral purpose is manifest in Nature, though the working of God is incomprehensible. His appearance in the poem shows how impossible it was for Job to get, from men of his generation, the help he needed. It therefore prepares, in a manner, for the vision of Jehovah, deepens our feeling of its necessity, and quickens the pulse of longing.

The claim that Elihu weakens, and even renders unnecessary, the address of the Lord, is groundless. They who advance it overlook the fact that the very appearance of God is of the utmost significance. The impressive element here is not so much what is said, as who says it. The omnipotence and omniscience of God had already been set forth by Job and the

friends, as well as by Elihu; but the simple fact of God's gracious appearance is more eloquent than any mortal speech. This appearance of God for him is the Divine witness which Job's heart has craved. Although he is humbled by the vision, and confesses, saying:

“Behold, I am small! What answer I thee?

My hand I do lay on my mouth.

I spake once, but begin not again;

And twice, but I do it no more”;

and again, later, confesses:

“By hearsay, of Thee I had heard,

But now hath mine eye beheld Thee:

Therefore I recant and repent

In dust and ashes”;

while he is humbled, he is calmed, assured, satisfied. He is not told why he suffers; but the development of the theme by no means requires this. He has the assurance of God's favor, and this is better than the solution of all intellectual difficulties. He knows that

“God stands within the shadow,

Keeping watch above His own.”

God does not accuse him of sin. He does not intimate that Job's sufferings are a punishment for wrong-doing. He must have done

so, had that indeed been true. His silence on this point is eloquent. It is a vindication of Job's good conscience; and now, more truly than before, he can "grapple God to his soul with hooks of steel." He can calmly leave to Him the reason of his sufferings.

Here the poem proper ends. The theme has received its complete development. Job has triumphed. His character stands before us, symmetrically portrayed. The poet gives us, in narrative form, in the Epilogue, the closing chapter of the hero's life. He relates what the Lord demanded of the friends, namely, sacrifices of burnt-offerings to avert from them the just dues of their folly; and what he gave to Job, namely, material wealth twice as great as he had before possessed, family and friends, and many years in which to enjoy all these blessings. This rebuke and reward are anticipated by the reader, yet it is a satisfaction to have them recorded. The fact that Job prays for his friends' restoration to God's favor is just what we should expect him to do. Indeed, we should have been confident that he did so, had it not been written in the Epilogue. Job could not do otherwise. Yet, while this fact really adds nothing to our

knowledge of the character of Job, it is significant, because it is a last crushing refutation of the insinuation of the Adversary, that Job's piety was selfish, and it is a last eloquent confirmation of Jehovah's words, "my servant Job, blameless and upright."

THE POETRY OF JOB

CHAPTER II.

NATURE IN THE POEM OF JOB.

THE sphere of this Hebrew poem is, in an eminent sense, the soul of man. It deals with the invisible rather than with the visible. It comes out of a heart that is too intent on the mystery of human suffering to allow it to dwell calmly on external forms and phenomena. Its hero is in no mood to write odes on the sunset, to admire the grace of flowers and the beauty of landscapes. Within his spirit there is only darkness and tempest. Hence his references to the outer world are sombre. Yet the other characters of the poem speak not infrequently of Nature, both inanimate and animate; and these passages, though mainly incidental, are so exalted and beautiful that they are worthy of special study by themselves.

In the present chapter we will follow the poet in his references to inanimate Nature. Inanimate we may say for convenience in treating the subject, though on the page before us everything breathes. (We may notice first the poet's reference to earthly objects and phenomena in the domain of inanimate Nature,

then, in order, the passages in which he speaks of the clouds and the stars.

In Job's curse upon the day of his birth and the night of his conception, we have not only a reflection of his bewildered and desperate spirit, but also a fitting introduction to the poetical genius of the author. Here is a power of imagination, an intensity and picturesqueness of utterance, that compare favorably with anything in the poem.

“That day—O let it be darkness!

May Elóah not seek it from heaven,

And o'er it let brightness not shine!

May darkness and gloom redeem it,

Let a cloud make its dwelling upon it,

Affright it the dark'nings of day!”

[*Chap. iii. 4-5.*]

Day is a living thing that can be seared by the darkness. The particular day of Job's birth is given over to the keeping of primeval gloom; the clouds are to brood over it; eclipses are to affright it. God should not ask after this day again, as he is accustomed to seek out the days in their turn and usher them in (xxxviii. 12-13). The days are thought of as having a distinct existence, and God calls them, one after the other, to fulfil their welcome mis-

sion. The Greek idea of the Hours was quite different from this. The Hours were goddesses, daughters of Zeus and Themis. As far as they had to do with the divisions of time, their office was to preside over the seasons as well as over the days; but besides this they cared for the cloud-gates of heaven, and performed manifold services for the gods. The Hebrew conception is simpler than this, and is of course free from any tinge of polytheism.

Going back of the day in which he first saw the light, Job curses the night in which his being began.

“That night—let obscurity seize it!

In the days of the year let it joy not,

Nor come into the number of months! . . .

Be darkened the stars of its dawning,

Let it wait for the light, and there be none,

And dawn’s eyelashes may it not see!”

[*Chap. iii. 6-9.*]

Night, also, is a living creature that rejoices among the days of the year. Even she has her fellowships and her joys. We have here a suggestion of the poet’s sympathy, a hint showing how natural it was for him to regard the world about him as instinct with harmony and joy. Day and Night rejoice, and rejoice

together. This picture of Night waiting for a morning that never comes, looking wistfully toward the eastern sky that never grows bright, might be transferred to the canvas or marble. It has all the intensity and vividness of Dante's painting. The reference to day-break in the last line of the passage just cited is noteworthy. Dawn is personified, and the first delicate rays of light are called his* eyelashes. Hence the break of day is the appearance on the eastern sky of a radiant, beneficent face. Thus Shakespeare thinks of dawn as a beautiful woman, when he says (*Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 5) :

"Jocund day

Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

Milton has the same idea in *Paradise Lost*, v. 1-2 :

"Now morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl."

And again (vi. 2) :

"Morn,

Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand
Unbarr'd the gates of light."

Morn is a fair woman, and the first breaking of light is her "rosy hand," an expression

* Dawn is masculine in Hebrew, not feminine as in our poetry.

demanding by the following idea, but in itself less true to nature than Job's comparison. We should compare, also, Shakespeare's expression (King John, v. 2):

“The beauteous eye of day,”

and the well-known lines (Hamlet, i. 1):

“But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.”

Dante speaks twice of the morning as a beautiful woman, but less happily, I think, than Job or Shakespeare. In the *Purgatorio* (canto ii.) he says:

“The white and the vermilion cheeks
Of beautiful Aurora, where I was,
By too great age were changing into orange.”

[Longfellow's Translation.]

This passage is faithful in the use of colors; but the likening of the morning sky to the cheeks of beautiful Aurora does not seem to be so apt as the figure of Job. There is little truth or beauty in comparing the morning sky with the cheeks of Aurora, for even the fairest cheeks do not shine; but the eye does indeed shine as it gives forth the radiance of the spirit. The only remaining passage in Dante that speaks of the dawn is a modification of

the same figure, but is still more open to criticism. It is borrowed in part from the *Iliad* (xi. 1-5) :

“The concubine of old Tithonus now
Gleamed white upon the eastern balcony
Forth from the arms of her sweet paramour ;
With gems her forehead all relucient was.”

[*Purgatorio*, ix. 1-4.]

But the whole sky is “relucient” with these “gems,” and one part of it may as well be termed the “forehead” as another. Indeed, any other portion is more “relucient” than the “forehead,” because low down on the eastern sky the “gems” are lost in the brightness of the morning.

It is in place to consider here the reference to morning which is made in the ode of the Almighty (xxxviii. 12-14) :

“Hast thou ever commanded a morning?
Hast shown to a dawning its place,
To lay hold of the corners of earth,
That thence may be shaken the wicked?
It [the earth] changes as signet-clay,
So that things appear as a garment.”

Night spreads a blanket over the earth. Morn comes, and, seizing the corners of this vast blanket, lifts it, and shakes the wicked out of

its thick folds. Earth, smitten by the dawn, is transfigured. What but a moment ago was formless clay shows now a clear and divine impress. The mountains and hills and valleys stand forth with sharply-cut outlines—the beauteous garment of the earth.

Shakespeare twice employs the first of the figures used in this passage. He says of the sun (*King Richard II.*, iii. 2) :

“When from under this terrestrial ball
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole :
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloak of night being plucked from off their
backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves.”

And again he uses the same figure (*Macbeth*, i. 5) :

“Nor heaven peeps through the blanket of the dark
To cry ‘Hold, hold!’”

The poets whom we have cited generally have in their allusions to morning the element of color. That this is wanting in Job’s references to dawn is not especially significant, since these are but two in number and are brief ; but we look in vain for color elsewhere in the poem. It has no rosy dawn, nor golden

sunset, nor brightly-colored flowers. It employs several words for blackness or darkness, as that which is gloomy and forbidding, but it uses these without distinction of shades.

When we recall the use of color in Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, the entire absence of it in the poem before us is striking, especially since it has much to do with Nature. The abundance of color in Homer may be seen from the following illustrations: Apollo is the son of the golden-haired Latona; Héré is the goddess with the white shoulders, white arms, and dark brows; Pallas is blue-eyed; Dawn is rosy-fingered, and clad in saffron robes; Achilles has yellow hair. Further, we learn that Homer's galleys are black, with scarlet prows and white sails; his sea is dark blue, or pale green, or gray; and the clouds which form a canopy over Mars upon Olympus are golden.* Dante has notably less color than Homer, less even than Shakespeare; yet his poem furnishes us with numerous examples of its use.

Concerning the absence of color in Job, we

**Iliad*, i. 36; i. 754; i. 572; xv. 102; vii. 30; i. 477; viii. 1; i. 197; i. 197; i. 141; ii. 637; i. 480; ii. 613; xvi. 34; i. 359; xiii. 523.

may observe that his theme is dark, a theme of suffering and mystery. Joy and gladness give color; grief puts on dark robes. But it may also be remarked that color in poetry is a matter of subordinate value. An eminent art-critic of the present day says: "Color, even as a source of pleasure, is much feebler than form." A landscape may have little or no color beneath the light of the stars, and yet its mountains do not lose their character. Their outlines and mass are the same. Their unchanging strength and grandeur still impress us, and, it may be, more deeply than when the color-giving sun is upon them.

We have spoken of Job's morning, and in its light we may now go forth with the poet and look again upon those objects and phenomena of the natural world to which he refers, and listen to his lines. He speaks of the flowers beneath our feet, and of the shadows that flit over the fields, using them to illustrate a truth for which no apter illustration was ever found. Man, he says,

"Comes forth as a flower, and withers;
Like a shadow he fleeth and stays not."

It is Job in the midst of his suffering and

mystery who is speaking (xiv. 2). His life has been suddenly blighted, and death is just before him. His eye finds out that in Nature which expresses the feeling of his heart. The flower withers, though seeming to deserve a better fate. Its brightness and fragrance endure but a moment. And man "fleeth as a shadow," swiftly, and leaving no track behind. The grass and leaves o'er which it passes are the same as before.

One of our poets of Nature re-echoes the thought of Job when he says of the transiency of life :

" As shadows formed by cloud and sun
 Flit o'er the summer grass ;
So in thy sight, Almighty One,
 Earth's generations pass."

The frequency with which these figures have been used has perhaps made us indifferent to their perfect propriety and beauty. Bishop Lowth said of the first part of Chap. xiv., including these verses : "*In genere elegiaco perfectissimus.*"

Of the two allusions to the grain-field, one is specially noticeable. Eliphaz is picturing the future bliss of Job, if he receives humbly the chastening of the Almighty ; and he can

think of no more beautiful way in which to speak of the evening of the patriarch's life than in these words :

“Thou shalt come to thy grave in strength,
As a sheaf goeth up in its time.”

[*Chap. v. 26.*]

It may be doubted whether a more fitting simile could have been drawn from the entire realm of Nature in which to clothe his thought. Heavy golden grain, ready for the garner,—such shall Job be. His mission accomplished, character ripened, virtue won ;—so shall it be when the reaper Death, “with his sickle keen,” shall one day come to Job.

There is another illustration drawn from the vegetable kingdom, which is exquisitely chosen. Job complains of God's treatment, and says :

“The wind-tossed leaf wilt Thou scare,
And chase the dry stubble away?”

[*Chap. xiii. 25.*]

These are among the boldest personifications to be found in the entire poem. A wind-tossed leaf can be “scared,” and that which seems more dead even than a fallen leaf, namely, the stubble, is alive and can be chased away. And what could better represent the

utterly helpless, hopeless, and mysterious condition of the afflicted Job than an autumn leaf and the dry stubble, driven hither and thither by the invisible wind? Dante likens the lost spirits whom Charon ferries over the Acheron to dead leaves (*Inferno*, iii. 112-115). Nothing is more hopeless than these.

We notice in the next place the poet's remarkable words on the sea, of which Herder said: "I do not believe that a more magnificent picture of this element was ever given."

"Who shut up the sea with doors,
When it burst through, came forth from the
womb;
When I made a cloud its garment,
And darkness its swaddling bands;
And broke up against it my bound,
And appointed a bar and doors;
And said, Thus far may'st thou come, but no
further,
And here be a bound for the pride of thy
waves!"

[*Chap.* xxxviii. 8-11.]

The sea is a living creature. It was born away back in the flight of time, and in its infancy it was swathed in clouds and darkness by the hand of the Almighty. It dwells in a house

that He made for it, a house whose bars and doors are the enduring rocks and the everlasting hills. Strong and proud though it be, it cannot overstep the bounds which He set for it. The poet here seizes on the leading characteristic of the ocean — namely, its might — and gives that the most worthy expression. Whether one stand upon the shore of the sea and watch the billows as they roll majestically landward, breaking with a loud roar against some rocky cliff; or whether one be on the bosom of the main, and notice how the great ship is tossed about as a plaything by the waves: the deepest impression that one receives is the impression of measureless strength. This is portrayed in the passage before us. It was necessary to shut up the sea as soon as it was born, necessary to break up against it a divine limit and restrain it with bars and doors. It was needful, and is evermore needful, that the Almighty himself should say unto it, “Thus far and no further!” This is the sea which the poet has sketched; this the sea as God made it.

The poet's references to the wind are instructive examples of his treatment of Nature.

By a bold metaphor he speaks of the wind twice as the "breath of God" (xxvi. 13; xxxvii. 10):

"By the breath of God there is ice";
and again,

"By His breath are the heavens made bright."

That invisible and mysterious force before which the dark clouds move silently away and reveal the blue sky, that is the breath of the Lord! God is very near in the world of the Hebrew poet. For him Nature is not a web woven by the earth-spirit, as in Goethe's "Faust," but it is the work of God's own hands; it is not the "living garment" of Deity, but an ever-fresh manifestation of His wisdom and power. At another time, when Job is complaining in the bitterness of his soul, he represents the wind as a courser:

"Thou dost mount me on wind, mak'st me ride,
And dost let me dissolve into storm."

[Chap. xxx. 22.]

It is possible that Milton had this passage in mind when he wrote of the spirits (*Paradise Lost*, ii. 539-40):

"Others ride the air in whirlwind."

The most remarkable use of this figure is

found in Shakespeare (*Macbeth*, i. 7). The thought of Duncan's innocence leads *Macbeth* to say of his own foul purpose:

“Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.”

Yet this passage has not the intensity we find in its parallel, the Hebrew poem; for there it is *Job* himself who bestrides the blast. He does not see “Pity” or “heaven's cherubim” upon the “sightless couriers of the air”; he sees himself there. This gives us a deep personal interest in the figure, which we do not feel for pity or the immortal cherubim. We may observe here, what is equally noticeable elsewhere, that no poet paints so vividly and tersely as *Job*, unless it be *Dante*.

The clouds of *Job*, to which we now turn, occupy a relatively large place in the poem; but they are always characteristically treated. We find, in the first place, a clear recognition of the mysteriousness of clouds. How are they poised in the sky? Why do they not sink to the earth? The young *Elihu*

is represented as asking Job this question :

“Dost thou know of the poisings of clouds,
Great things of One perfect in knowledge?”

[*Chap. xxxvii. 16.*]

“One perfect in knowledge” would know how those fleecy clouds hang there in the calm summer sky, not one settling earthward, not one tottering as though the invisible hands of the air were no longer able to sustain its weight; but this question was too high for Elihu. Job refers to the same mystery in his reply to Bildad (xxvi. 8). It is a standing miracle in his eyes that the thick clouds are not broken beneath their weight of waters.

Again, the poet sees the divine ministry of the clouds. They are not merely beautiful objects, tempting the eye upward to their ever-changing forms and manifold colorings; they are also celestial messengers. They come forth on errands of mercy or wrath.

“Yea, richly He loadeth the cloud,
Disperseth the cloud of His light;
And it turneth itself about by His steering,
To do whate’er He commands it
On the face of th’ inhabited earth,—
If as a rod, when His earth needs that,
Or as mercy, He cause it to come.”

[*Chap. xxxvii. 11-13.*]

That swift storm-cloud is a "rod" of the Lord. In its track the green meadows are changed into sandy wastes, and the grain is prostrated to the earth. But those silent clouds that came out of the east before the sun was up, and took their way over the land, were God's messengers of mercy; for they satisfied the thirsty earth, and gave new freshness to leaf and flower.

The reverent and simple way in which the Hebrew poet regarded Nature is further illustrated in these lines:

"Yea, knows one the unfoldings of clouds,
The great crash of His tent?"

[*Chap.* xxxvi. 29.]

The dark thunder-cloud which Elihu sees approaching is a "tent" of the Almighty. A childlike yet sublime conception. Yonder comes the threatening cloud, impenetrable to human vision, majestic in its mountainous proportions and in its steady onward sweep. There is a mysterious power within it, which ever and anon lights up its caverns and towering summits with a marvellous light, and straightway its depths are shaken by a voice that reaches to the distant hills, and is sent back by them in long, heavy reverberations.

Now its dark folds are thrown around the summit of yon high hill, as once the cloud enwrapped the rocky crest of Sinai; and now descending along the valley, its lowest drapery, like streaming pennons that have been shredded by rude blasts, almost touches the earth. Out of its dark depths comes "the great rain of His might." As the cloud passes by, and recedes further and further from us, we see that its upper parts are glistening white. This is the tent of the Lord!

It is our loss that we have magnified natural law to the exclusion, as it were, of the Creator. In pondering one truth we have lost sight of the other. The Hebrew conception of Nature is as true to-day as it ever was. A storm-cloud is still a tent of the Almighty; the wind, His breath. But our feeling does not keep pace with our understanding. It may not be as easy to see God's hand in the objects and phenomena of Nature now that forces and laws are better understood; but it is none the less true that His hand is there, because we have learned a little about laws and forces. These only show how He is present.

On the heaven above the transient clouds,

the heaven of the sun, moon, and stars, the author of Job seems often to have meditated ; and his allusions to the celestial bodies are full of the simple beauty and sublimity that characterizes his entire treatment of Nature. The correct and appreciative eye appears in the use he makes of the stars and sky as symbols of the most perfect purity. So Eliphaz (xv. 15) :

“ Behold, in His pure ones He trusts not,
And the heavens are not clean in his eyes.”

Bildad also has the same thought (xxv. 5) :

“ Lo, even the moon shines not brightly,
And the stars are not clean in His eyes.”

The argument requires that the poet should choose the purest object in all the world, and he has done it. Our eyes never look on aught in Nature that seems so absolutely pure as the unclouded sky and the stars. This impression may be deepened by the fact that sky and stars are so far above us—so far above the dust and uncleanness of earth, far above the clouds even, which darken our day. All that is about us seems to partake in some degree of earthly defilement, and we involuntarily locate absolute purity far from us, far above us. Then, too, we may instinctively associate with the visible

heavens the immaculateness of that invisible and spiritual world which we locate yonder among the stars ; but however this may be, it is certainly true that the natural objects which the Hebrew poet took to symbolize purity are the purest symbols that one can find.

The chief star-passages of the poem are contained in the ode of Jehovah. When He speaks of founding the earth, He says (xxxviii. 6-7) :

“On what were its pedestals sunk,
Or the stone of its corner who laid,
When the stars of the dawn sang together,
And shouted all children of God?”

These familiar lines tell of that serene and perfect bliss which pervaded God's creatures on the fair morning of creation. From every star and angel arose a rapturous song of adoration and joy, that filled the sky with celestial harmony.

It may seem like an echo of the last two lines, when we read in Dante what he says of Fortune :

“Among the other primal creatures gladsome
She turns her sphere, and blissful she rejoices.”

[*Inferno*, vii. 95-96.]

The passage in “The Merchant of Venice” (v. 1) may owe its inspiration to the lines in

Job; but it does not equal their picture of unclouded joy, nor has it their simplicity. Lorenzo says to Jessica :

“ Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold ;
There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins.”

In the Hebrew poem the stars sing like stars ; the character of the melody is left to the imagination. Then the joyousness of the Hebrew scene is greater than that of the Shakespearean, for both the stars and the angels are singing. Shakespeare’s cherubins listen while the stars quire to them. Were they as happy as the children of God, they could not help singing. Milton has a passage in which the singing of the stars seems to be understood as rhythmical motion.

“ They as they move
Their starry dance, in numbers that compute
Days, months, and years.”

[*Paradise Lost*, iii. 579-81.]

The difference between these lines and the simple majesty of the Hebrew is easily felt. There is little of truth or fitness in the comparison of Milton : little truth, for the dance

certainly emphasizes motion, but the stars do not move appreciably ; and little fitness, for a dance, even though performed by King David before the Ark of the Lord, is still infinitely below the dignity of the celestial spheres, moving with noiseless precision through uncounted centuries. The sublime poetry of the stars is lost when they are made to "dance," and when they are looked upon as an *almanac*, good to "compute days, months, and years."

The remaining passage on the stars is an interrogation of the Almighty.

"Canst thou bind fast the Pleiades' bands,
Or loosen the cords of Orion?
Bring forth at their time the Stations,
And the Bear with her young canst thou lead?"

[*Chap.* xxxviii, 31-32.]

These constellations are with one exception the same that Vulcan, "the great artist," wrought upon the disk of the massy shield which Thetis had begged for her son Achilles. After he had wrought the earth and heaven, the great deep and the never-resting sun and the full moon, he set the stars that shine in the round sky, "The Pleiades and Hyades, the mighty Orion and the Bear, called also the Wain, which turns about in the same place,

observing Orion, yet never bathes in the ocean” (*Iliad*, xviii. 486-89). (The Hebrew poet does not use the stars as ornaments; but employs them to teach the littleness and feebleness of man, and the wisdom and power of God.) Jehovah is the speaker. He can bind, or rather has bound, the band of the Pleiades, so that from age to age they journey together, not one straying away from the rest; He fastened the cords which hold the giant Orion firmly in his place; He leads the Bear and her young through their vast circles. Here, as elsewhere, the poet introduces Nature, not for what it is in itself, but as an object-lesson of the Infinite, “the vicar of the almighty Lord.” The stars and the clouds and the flowers serve as the setting of some great thought.

CHAPTER III.

THE ANIMAL KINGDOM IN THE POEM
OF JOB.

IT is a noteworthy fact that the poem of Job, while profoundly religious and occupied with the deep problem of God's moral government, has much to say about the beasts of the field and the fowl of the sky. Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare together have scarcely as many pictures out of the animal world as has this one Hebrew production. The relative predominance in Job of descriptions from the animal kingdom, and the unsurpassed excellence of these descriptions, are indications of a deep and lively sympathy with Nature, and also of a childlike conception of the relation between Nature and God.

Of the propriety of introducing into serious poetry long descriptions from the animal world there can scarcely be any doubt, since the composition of Job. It has here been demonstrated with conclusive force that the animal kingdom is not beneath the consideration of sublime poetry. This kingdom has numerous representatives in one of the greatest produc-

tions of the human mind, and they are not there to fill up a gap; on the contrary, they appear in the finest portions of the poem. Their right has therefore been abundantly vindicated to a place in the loftier spheres of serious poetry.

But, granted that the animal kingdom can afford appropriate material for the serious poet, is it fitting that the Lord himself should be represented as the poet, describing the folly of the ostrich and the structure of the crocodile? Is it not out of keeping with the dignity of Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, when a poet ascribes to him a delineation of the wild ass or of the repulsive hippopotamus? Is not this in violation of good taste? If so, then a poet who has given us the sublimest conceptions of the majesty, wisdom, and power of the Almighty, a poet who elsewhere manifests deep reverence and great humility in his references to God, has overstepped the limits of good taste. This will not be regarded as probable. The simple fact, therefore, that the very poet who represents Jehovah as describing the war-horse, also abounds in the loftiest conceptions of Jehovah ever voiced in human language, will go far

toward shielding the practice in question from the shafts of hostile criticism. The judgment of such a poet is worthy of a good deal of consideration. But, further, it seems legitimate to say that if it appeared good unto the Lord to impart to the wild ass and the aurochs an untamable spirit, to give the hawk an unerring instinct to guide it in its long migrations, to give the eagle's eye an unexampled power of vision, and the rock-goat an unconquerable shyness, it cannot be improper for Him to refer to these characteristics. Why should it be thought beneath the dignity of Him who created the crocodile to represent Him as describing his own handiwork?

Assuming, now, that this liberty of the Hebrew poet needs no further justification, it may be asked, in the next place, what are the principal demands that can rightfully be made upon the serious poet who speaks of the animal kingdom?

First, it seems reasonable to demand that he shall tell the truth. What we demand of the serious poet elsewhere, we expect here also. True poetry is always truthful poetry. Imagination does not imply falsity. Ideal persons and relations are not necessarily impossible. The

imagination of the true poet works along the lines of truth. If he ventures to speak of beast or bird, he recognizes as far as possible the nature which God has given them. He does not ascribe the dove's nature to the hawk any more than the dove's plumage. He does not create new orders of animals, nor demoralize the orders already existing. If he is wandering in mythological forests, we expect that he will meet with mythological beings; but we ask that the creatures which he finds in the actual forests of earth and about the habitations of man shall be real, not mythological. His horse must be a horse, not a centaur. It cannot be allowed to possess human reason any more than a human head. It must have equine qualities as well as equine proportions. The eagle must be an eagle, not a hawk or a phoenix. And in so far as the poet describes beast or bird, he must tell the truth. He will tell it in a very different way from the ornithologist and zoölogist; but nevertheless it will be the truth which he communicates.

Secondly, we certainly have a right to demand that the serious poet who would describe any member of the animal kingdom shall give us truth that is poetically important. His de-

scription of a war-horse is very unsatisfactory if he talks of mere color and shape instead of character; if he simply calls attention to his "round hoofs, short joints, long fetlocks, broad breast, full eyes, small head, wide nostril, high crest, short ears, straight legs, thin mane, thick tail, tender hide"; and does not the rather portray his nature and capacities. All these items may be true, and may be important in a way; but taken by themselves they are not poetically important.

But we can demand, in the third place, that the poet shall not describe for the sake of describing; but shall make his picture a poetical means to some truly poetical and worthy end. Doubtless a mere word-painting of a lion or an eagle, which seeks nothing beyond itself, may please the fancy of a moment, and afford a sort of literary pleasure entirely apart from the object described; but as poetry, it is not worth the time spent on it. A literary photograph of beast or bird, however ingeniously and happily constructed, scarcely deserves the name of poetry. A poet of Nature must be something more than a sensitive plate. This is good in its place, but its product is not a poem, else were the photographer the best poet. Poetry

is always, to a greater or less extent, a product of the imagination ; but a literary photograph is not such a product. The poet of Nature must do something more than cast upon the mind such an image as the object described casts upon the retina of the eye. He must see, and make us see, something that is concealed from the physical vision. He must be a prophet—that is, a forth-teller—of the secrets of Nature.

We pass from these preliminary remarks to a consideration of the poem of Job in its references to the animal kingdom. Before taking up the longer descriptions of beasts and birds, we may just glance at the numerous allusions to them in which the poem abounds. The moth and the house of the moth are symbols of extreme fragility and transientness (see iv. 18-19 ; xxvii. 18) ; the hope of the wicked is a spider's house (vii. 14) ; the adder's poison and viper's tongue stand for the fatal consequences of cherished sin (xx. 16) ; the eagle swooping down on its prey represents the swiftness with which the days pass (ix. 26) ; the phoenix dying in its nest is the picture in Job's mind of his own end (xxix. 18) ; and the wailing ostrich is the emblem of Job in his

affliction (xxx. 29). These comparisons are all eminently appropriate. The same cannot always be said of Homer's allusions to the animal world. His comparisons, though meant seriously, sometimes provoke a smile, and sometimes belittle his Greek and Trojan heroes. For instance, he likens the grave Trojan nobles, who, sitting on the towers of the city, are taking counsel, to locusts chirping in the tree-tops (*Iliad*, iii. 146-153); Ulysses is likened to a thick-fleeced ram (iii. 197-198); Agamemnon is like a bull amid the horned herd (ii. 580); and the long-haired Greeks, thronging the plain in multitudes, are like the flies that swarm in the herdsman's stalls in spring-time, when new milk has filled the pails (ii. 469-477). Dante seldom draws comparisons from the animal world, but those which he has are of exquisite propriety and beauty (*Inferno*, ix. 76-81; *Paradiso*, v. 100-105).

We turn now to that series of twelve descriptions which we find in the discourse of Jehovah,—descriptions of the lion, the raven, the rock-goat, the hind, the wild ass, the au-rochs, the ostrich, the charger, the hawk, the eagle, the hippopotamus, and the crocodile. The references to the lion and raven, the hawk

and eagle, are brief sketches, and the rock-goat and hind are mentioned together. The poet says of the lion :

“Canst thou hunt for the lioness prey,
And the young lions’ appetite sate,
When they crouch in their lurking-places,
When they lie in wait in the lair ?”

[*Chap.* xxxviii. 39-40.]

As far as this picture of the lion-family extends, it makes us acquainted with the leonine nature ; it is a character-sketch. The stealthiness of the lion appears in his “crouching” and “lying in wait” ; and his carnivorous nature also is given in the same figure. The ferocity of lions is implied in the question, “Canst thou hunt,” etc. Were Job to attempt to feed the lioness and her young, he would be devoured forthwith. The lion is a favorite with Homer, and his sketches, like this in Job, are mainly of the leonine nature. He notes the stealth and ferocity, the strength and carnivorous character, of the lion. (See *Iliad*, v. 554-559 ; xi. 172-176.)

The allusion to the raven is not descriptive, but simply has a bearing on the argument (xxxviii. 41). The thought that the young raven’s cry reaches the ear of God may serve

to illustrate the intimate and kindly relation which the poet conceived to exist between Nature and its Author.

The rock-goat and hind are briefly characterized with reference to their shy, hardy, and independent nature (xxxix. 1-4). There is but One who knows when and where they bring forth their young, and how these same young grow up in the field; and He it is who also makes them sufficient for the tasks of their lives. He sees them in their hour of helplessness, far from the haunts of men, and He cares for them. Even so Jesus said of the sparrows, "Not one of them falleth to the ground without your Father." He is present in the lonely haunts of the forests and mountains. He who calleth the stars by name knoweth the rock-goat and hind. They are not cast adrift by Him.

The description of the wild ass breathes the very spirit of perfect animal freedom.

"Who has sent the wild ass away free,
And the bands of the fleet one hath loosed?
To whose house I have made the waste place,
And the desert of salt his abode.
He doth laugh at the din of the town,
The noise of the driver he hears not.

The mountains' choice spots are his pasture,
And for every green thing he doth seek."

[*Chap. xxxix. 5-8.*]

The lines of this picture are drawn only as one could draw them who felt a true sympathy with Nature. The joy that this free child of the mountains takes in his freedom, "laughing" at the din of the distant town, is re-felt by the poet. He also has escaped from the noise of the city, and has breathed the air of the steppe and the hills.

The picture of the aurochs, which succeeds that of the wild ass, is of a different sort. The wild and unconquerable spirit of this animal is brought out into a strong light, not by picturing him among the mountains, but by asking whether he will take the place and perform the services of the tame ox. Here, as throughout the discourse of Jehovah, questions are employed with such effect that one is reminded of what Longinus says: "It seems to me that questions give a discourse more force and emphasis than all the figures of pictorial representation." The passage runs as follows:

"Is the wild ox willing to serve thee,

Will he pass the night at thy crib?

Canst thou bind the wild ox to the ridge with
his cord,

Or harrow the valleys behind thee will he ?
Dost thou trust him since great is his might,
And committest thy labor to him ?
Dost thou trust him to gather thy seed,
And bring to thy floor ? ”

[*Chap. xxxix. 9-12.*]

This is indirectly descriptive. The poet does not affirm of the aurochs that he is untamable and of great strength; yet he produces this impression in a vivid manner, and the very indirectness of the description seems to add to the fierceness and fearful character of the animal described.

The ostrich follows the aurochs. The passage is wholly descriptive.

“The wing of the ostrich waves gladly :
Is’t a gentle feather and pinion ?
Nay, she leaveth her eggs to the earth,
And warmeth them on the dust ;
She forgets that a foot may crush them,
May trample them beasts of the field.
She treats harshly her young, as not hers ;
Is her labor in vain, she cares not ;
For wisdom God made her forget,
And gave her no dower in insight.
When she beateth her pinions on high,
She doth laugh at the horse and his rider.”

[*Chap. xxxix. 13-18.*]

This is another character-sketch. We are made acquainted with the ostrich in a few words, with its weakness and its strength. We see the bird at home and abroad, in its domestic relations and as pursued by the hunter. Its most noticeable features—a strange lack of affection for its young, and remarkable speed—are tersely sketched. Yet not for the sake of the sketch: the poet has a higher end in view.

The description of the ostrich is followed by that of the famous war-horse, the only domestic animal introduced by the poet. Herder says of this passage: “The description of the war-horse is perhaps the noblest ever produced.” We cite it in full:

“Canst thou give to the charger strength?
Canst thou mantle his neck with trembling?
Canst thou cause him to leap as a locust?
A dread is his neighing majestic.
He stamps in the valley, and joys in his might;
To meet the armed host he goes forth.
He laugheth at fear unamazed,
And turneth not back from the sword.
Upon him the quiver doth rattle,
The glittering lance and spear.
With stamping and anger he swallows the earth.
And stays not when soundeth the trumpet.

He saith when it soundeth, Aha!
And from far he scenteth the battle,
The princes' shout and the war-cry."

[*Chap. xxxix. 19-25.*]

Homer's war-horses are generally connected with scenes of blood and carnage. Here it is the eve of battle, but we are spared the clash of weapons. This is in keeping with the dignity of the speaker. The charger's neck is mantled with "trembling," that is, with a trembling mane. Homer hardly ever omits mentioning the mane when he speaks of war-horses. They have luxuriant manes that sweep the ground (*Iliad*, xix. 405), or flowing manes (xxiii. 14), or tossing manes which stream upon the shoulders (vi. 503). This is the first allusion to outward attractiveness that we have met with in Job's descriptions.

Jehovah makes the charger "leap as a locust," and with stamping he "swallows" the ground. The steeds in Homer, which were so fleet that they could fly along the topmost ears of wheat and not break them, were mythological, the children of Boreas (*Iliad*, xx. 226). The fleetness of his real horses is perhaps best described in his account of the chariot-race (xxiii. 500-503): "All bright with tin and

gold, the chariot rolled on after the swift horses ; and only slight was the track of the tires behind in the light dust, so swiftly they flew." Shakespeare uses Job's figure of speed when speaking of the horse of Henry IV., but weakens it by saying that "he *seemed* in running to devour the way."

Again, the fearlessness of the charger and his eagerness for the fray are inimitably portrayed in Job. He "laughs" at fear unmazed, he turns not back from the sword, he is as excited as his rider can be, he scents the battle from afar. He is all life and fire and fearless strength. Every verse is a picture, and the description is as terse as it is vivid.

The hawk and the eagle are next introduced ; the former for the marvellous instinct that guides it in its long migrations,—the latter for its power of wing, its strength of vision, and its carnivorous appetite. These are the Lord's endowments. Man's wisdom and might cannot bring about these results. Thus the instinct of the hawk and the vision of the eagle are made to teach humility. It is God who guides the hawk, and who bids the eagle soar aloft.

The elaborate descriptions of the hippopot-

amus and crocodile are regarded by Professor Dillman and some others as not belonging to the original poem, but as the product of a later and inferior poet. This is not the place to consider their arguments, which, however, seem very insufficient. We have simply to call attention to the leading characteristics of the passages as poetry. That the descriptions are relatively long may be due in large part to the fact that the creatures spoken of were unknown to the readers. It is not in itself an argument against the genuineness of the passages. The hippopotamus and crocodile are not attractive and noble, as are the war-horse and lion, and hence the descriptions of them are naturally less to our taste; but the choice of these creatures is determined by the course of thought in Jehovah's discourse, and we are to judge of the merits of the passages independent of the subjects described.

The delineation of the hippopotamus (xl. 15-24) is as good a character-sketch as is that of the ostrich. It is true to nature, and it gives in a graphic manner the remarkable features of the animal. His bones are bars of brass, his tail is like a cedar, and where other creatures are weak he is strong. His jaws

are like swords, and yet he is so peaceable that even when he is hungry the beasts of the field can sport around him without risk. When resting he lies secluded beneath a roof formed by the large leaves, the white and blue blossoms of the lotus. Then, too, he is as much at home in the water as on land; he would not be disturbed though a swift Jordan were rushing against him. The passage closes with an ironical summons to capture this animal:

“In the sight of his eyes let one take him!

With hooks let one pierce through his nose!”

The closing description (chapter xli.), that of the crocodile, has certainly as marked evidences of genuineness as the preceding. It begins (v. 1-8) with a series of ironical interrogations, like the passages on the auroch, though the irony is stronger. These questions give a vague but fearful impression of the untamable and unconquerable character of the crocodile, all the more fearful because vague. After a parenthesis (9-11), comes a somewhat minute description of the characteristic features of the crocodile (12-24). His scales are a “garment” that no one can open; his great jaws are “doors,” and “dread” is the

doorkeeper ; his eyes are like the eyelids of dawn ; sparks and torches come forth from his mouth ; power dwells on his neck ; terror casts down any luckless one who chances to come in the way ; and hard as the nether millstone is his heart. The eyes of the crocodile are said to shine so brightly that they can be seen before the creature's head comes near the surface of the water. The crocodile's eyes are the symbol of dawn in the Egyptian hieroglyphics. According to Bochart, the breath of the crocodile is ejected with such violence that flames seem to come from mouth and nostrils. Hence the figures employed in Job are no extreme hyperbole. Nothing in any of the preceding descriptions surpasses in vividness and force these lines :

“ On his neck doth power abide,
And before him terror casts down.”

In one instance, namely, in the description of the crocodile's scales (15-17), there is prolixity ; but this has no weight as against the genuineness of the passage, for an occasional prolix verse may be found in other parts of the poem. Even Homer sometimes nods. The last section (v. 25-34), which speaks of the crocodile as related to man and to his sur-

roundings, is vigorous and vivid ; but we must pass it without further remark, and add now a few concluding sentences.

This brief study of the animal kingdom in the poem of Job is perhaps sufficient to show that the poet satisfies in a remarkable manner the chief demands that could rightfully be made upon him. He is faithful to nature. He is a close observer and a sympathetic friend. He seizes always upon that which is characteristic. He portrays the nature of beast and bird with the simplicity of Homer and the vividness of Dante. There is nothing in any literature that surpasses his delineations in picturesqueness, terseness, and power. Finally, in his descriptions of the animal world he has ever a high end in view, which he also attains. He gives us there object-lessons on the wisdom, the power, and the providence of God, and on the frailty and ignorance of man. We are instructed at every step, and at every step are aware that we are instructed by a poet. The flight of the hawk carries our thought out to the invisible world, to Him who gave insight ; the soaring of the eagle is at God's bidding ; the young raven's cry is not only into the ear of its mother but also into

the ear of the Lord ; Nature is as it were sanctified and glorified. The presence of Jehovah is everywhere. He has a fatherly care and interest in each living thing. His wisdom speaks from the earth and the air ; His power is manifest on the right hand and on the left. His providence extends to the young eaglets, and to the steps of the lion. The world of the Hebrew poet is a world close to God, and full of His presence. A wise man, therefore, should walk softly, not speaking of things too high for him, nor fancying that he has an arm like that of God.

CHAPTER IV.

HUMAN LIFE IN THE POEM OF JOB.

“**N**O mortal,” says Homer, “ever suffered such pain and affliction” as the hero Ulysses. “The gods veiled him in darkness more than all mortals,” and he is the ideal of a “noble sufferer.” “The fearful dangers through which Ulysses goes exalt his fame and glorify him.” But the dangers of Ulysses are physical; his sufferings, too, are mainly physical. Job’s sufferings are predominantly mental, and indeed the intensest mental anguish that is possible to man.

The “Job” of profane literature suffers as a man belonging to this world only: the Job of the Bible suffers as a being who belongs not only to this world, but also to the world which is spiritual and unseen. When the afflictions of Job had perhaps exceeded the utmost measure of Ulysses’ sufferings, he was still calm, a “noble sufferer” indeed; strong, not as a rock that has no feeling, but with the greater strength of a heart that rests upon the everlasting arms. His great soul found utterance in words such as never came from the lips of Ulysses.

“Naked came I from my mother’s womb,
And naked shall thither return :
Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken ;
The name of Jehovah be blessed !

[*Chap. i. 21.*]

No complaint is heard as yet. The hour of complaint has not yet come. But when the bitterness of Job’s lot has at length settled into his lonely spirit, and when he feels the terrible mystery of it all, then, out of such sufferings as Ulysses never experienced, came complaints on human life such as neither Homer nor any other classic poet ever uttered. In depth of religious thought, in forcefulness, and in beauty of expression, they are unsurpassed by anything either in profane or in sacred literature.

To these elegiac passages in the poem of Job the attention of the reader is now called. And first to the pathetic outburst of chapter iii.

“Wherefore gives He light to the weary,
And life to the bitter of soul ?
Who hope for death, but there is none,
Who dig for it more than for treasures ;
Who joy with joy exceeding,
Who exult when they find a grave ;
To a man whose pathway is hid,
Whom Elóah hath hedged round about.”

What an intensity of desire is here por-

trayed! Men searching for death with the earnestness which was manifested in digging for hid treasures in those days when men commonly buried their valuables in the earth for safe keeping. Here are men who, on finding a grave, their grave, are filled with exceeding joy, and exult at being vanquished as though they were the vanquishers!

Shakespeare tells us of one man who was in such a state of desire, namely, King Richard. He exclaims (iii. 3):

“My large kingdom for a little grave,
A little, little grave, an obscure grave.”

Job's longing for a grave is not without a certain noble foundation. It is not loss of friends, or disappointment, or disgust with the world; it is because God has “hid his pathway,” hedged him about with mystery, and he does not know why. Elóah has wronged him, Elóah has enclosed him in His net (xix. 6).

Again, we hear Job describing his sufferings, and the intensity of his language is paralleled only by the terrible earnestness of the thought.

“Th' Almighty's arrows are in me,
Whose poison my spirit doth drink;
God's terrors are ordered against me.”

[Chap. vi. 4.]

Dante never paints more vividly than this, and never gives a more telling concentration of solemn thought. The Lord is an archer, shooting at Job poisoned arrows! It is noticeable that the figure is spiritualized in the next line, where it is said that Job's spirit, not his flesh, drinks the poison. In the following line it is not a single archer whom Job sees as his foe, but an army of terrors, drawn up in battle array. These are no earthly terrors, else Job could meet them; but the "terrors of God" encompass him in fighting order. We find the same thought somewhat modified in chapter x. 12:

"Thou renewest Thy witnesses 'gainst me,
And increasest Thine anger at me,
Fresh troops and an army against me."

Even these divinely appointed legions are wearied by their repeated attacks upon Job; yet fresh troops are ever at hand to replace those that retire. The hostile ranks remain full.

A similar war-picture meets us later in the poem (xix. 12):

"Together His troops come on,
And cast up against me their way,
And encamp round about my tent."

Here the "troops" are casting up breastworks

from which they may assail Job in his helplessness, and they lay permanent siege against him on every side. He is shut in by the legions of God. There is no chance for flight, and resistance is vain.

Not less intense and vigorous are other passages in which Job speaks of his divine Adversary.

“He bruise me sore with a tempest,
And adds to my wounds without cause.
He suffers me not to take breath,
But sates me with bitternesses.”

[Chap. ix. 17-18.]

“Bruised with a tempest,” and this directly from the hand of the Lord,—a man may be excused for complaining under such circumstances. This is heroic complaint. It is not like the weeping of Achilles when Agamemnon takes from him his prize, the maid Brisëis (*Iliad*, i. 356). Job speaks again in similar terms, later, in the days of his misery:

“I cry unto Thee unanswered;
I stand, and Thou lookest upon me.
Thou’rt changed toward me to a tyrant,
With strong hand Thou dost persecute me.
Thou dost mount me on wind, mak’st me ride,
And dost let me dissolve into storm.”

[Chap. xxx. 20-22.]

A passage from chapter xiii. may be read in this connection :

“Wherefore dost Thou cover Thy face,
And why dost Thou count me Thy foe?
The wind-tossed leaf wilt Thou scare,
And chase the dry stubble away?
Thou puttest my feet in the stocks,
And dost carefully watch all my ways;
Mak’st a line round the soles of my feet,
I who fail like a worm-eaten thing,
As a garment that moths have consumed.”

[*Chap. xiii. 24-25, 27-28.*]

These passages give us a glimpse into misery profound enough to make this world a world of “infinite bitterness,” more truly than it ever was to the poet of the Middle Ages. What despair in this “wind-tossed leaf” and “dry stubble”! What agony in the thought that the mysterious power that is tossing him hither and thither is the Lord himself! What an Argus-eyed watch is pictured by this “line round the soles of my feet”! God is an inquisitor of the most painful exactness. Let Job move but a hair’s breadth, and it is noted. Let him deviate but an infinitesimal distance from the line of absolute rectitude, and he is called into judgment and punished. And what

desolation in his "worm-eaten thing," his "garment that moths have consumed"!

Job refers in another place also to the scrutiny of God, and tells us what some of the legions are which God has sent against him:

"A sea am I, am I a whale,
That a watch Thou should'st set over me?
When I say that my couch shalt console me,
My bed shall ease my complaint;
Then with dreams Thou dost frighten me sore,
And with visions dost make me afraid."

[*Chap. vii. 12-14.*]

It seems to Job that there is bitter irony in God's treatment of him. He, a poor, helpless, friendless mortal, sitting on his ash-heap, is watched as closely as though he were a fierce sea threatening to deluge some fair plain, or a dangerous sea-monster about to wreck a ship and destroy human lives.

The following lines are as pathetic as the first were ironical. Job lies down at night, thinking that sleep, which "when it comes to sorrow is a comforter," will ease his complaint; but alas! he is kept in fear by the terrible dreams and visions that God sends against him. It is not strange that he should come to dread the night.

“When I lay me to rest, then I say,
When rise I? but eve groweth long,
And till dawn I am full of tossings.”

[*Chap. vii. 4.*]

His evening grows long, for “grief makes one hour ten.” In the following passage the tone is softened, the words are half plaint, half prayer:

“O that in Sheól Thou wouldst hide me,
Wouldst conceal me till past be Thy wrath,
Wouldst set me a bound and recall me!
If man die shall he live again?
All the days of my warfare I’d wait,
Until my release should come.
Thou wouldst call, and to Thee I’d reply;
For the work of Thy hands Thou wouldst yearn.”

[*Chap. xiv. 13-15.*]

Job feels, like the Greek poet, that “not to have been born is the best”; but he does not think of taking his own life. He would be glad if God would cut him off, or, as he beautifully expresses himself here, would “hide him in Sheól.” But he does not long for an “iron sleep”; he does not wish to be hid from God forever, but only so long as God’s wrath continues. Then, when the storm is past, when the happy day of release comes, and God calls in the “still kingdom,” “Job!” he

will reply. He has a feeling that God will “yearn” after him, because he is the work of His hands.

We notice one more complaint of Job concerning God :

“O that I knew where to find Him,—
Could come even unto His place! . . .
Lo, eastward I go, He’s not there,
And westward, I do not observe Him;
To the north, when He works, I discern not,
He hides in the south, and I see not.”

[*Chap.* xxviii. 3, 8-9.]

These are the saddest lines in Job, if not in all literature. Job has lost his God, and though he seeks Him on every side, he finds Him not. The home of his heart is desolate; its warmth and brightness are gone; the sound of the Father’s voice is heard there no more. Only the infinitely disconsolate cry is heard: “O that I knew where to find Him!” Job feels himself alone in the great universe. He turns hither and thither, calling his God, but there is no response. It is not that God has ceased to be, but — something even more desolating to the soul — He has ceased to be gracious. He has hidden Himself in anger. He has concealed Himself as a foe.

We pass on to notice what Job says of the brevity of life :

“My days are swifter than couriers,
They flee, they see nothing good.
They glide by as boats of bulrushes,
As an eagle swoops down on his prey.”

[*Chap. ix. 25-26.*]

These comparisons are exquisitely chosen. The courier was the living telegraph of the ancient world. A light boat of reeds, rowed by strong and trained hands, how easily and noiselessly does it glide by ! (See *Inferno*, viii. 13-16.) But swifter still is the flight of an eagle, as from some lofty height he swoops down with folded wings upon his unsuspecting prey. Similar illustrations of the brevity of life are drawn by Homer from the natural world. He says in one place, “Like the leaves in the wood, so are the generations of men.” (*Iliad*, vi. 186.) And again, “Men are frail as leaves in the forest, which now grow together in strength, enjoying the fruits of the earth, and then perishing fly away.” In the language of Shakespeare, “A man’s life’s no more than to say one.” Job’s comparisons are always concrete. His symbols of swiftness are the courier, the light-boat, the swooping eagle, and the flying shadow.

Shakespeare, on the contrary, draws often from the spiritual world, and uses abstract comparisons. He says in *Hamlet* (i. 4) :

“Haste me to know ’t ; that I, with wings as swift
As meditation, or the thoughts of love
May sweep to my revenge.”

We consider, in the next place, Job’s conceptions of death and *Sheól*. The way to the shadow-world is a way without return.

“As a cloud melts away and is gone,
So who goes to *Sheól* shall not rise ;
He shall not come again to his house,
And his place shall know him no more.”

[*Chap. vii. 9-10.*]

That is “the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.” The house whose master has gone the way to *Sheól* shall not know him again. Job’s pictures of “the undiscovered country” vary with his varying moods. When he is longing to die and despairing of the divine favor, he represents the “still kingdom” as attractively as the faith of his day would permit.

“The wicked have ceased there from troubling,
And there are the weary at rest.
Together in peace are the captives,
They hear not a taskmaster’s voice.

There small and great are the same,
And the servant is free from his lord."

[Chap. iii. 17-19.]

This is less than the classic poet says of Elysium, at least in some respects; in others it is more. Virgil says of the realm of the departed: "There falls no snow, no hail there destroys, no hurricane rages there through the blooming land. But zephyrs rustling move, sent by Oceanus for cooling." These circumstances are but external: the thought of Job lies deeper. His dark Sheól has a more attractive feature than an Italian climate and sea-breezes, and that feature is *rest*. In Virgil's Elysium no hurricane rages; in Job's Sheól the wicked have ceased from troubling.

Later, and in a different mood, Job gives us a different description of Sheól. He dwells now on its forbidding aspect, because he wishes to awaken pity in the Lord, and move Him to grant a respite from suffering.

"Are not my days few? Let Him cease,
Turn away, that I cheer up a little,
Ere I go—and I shall not return—
To a land of darkness and gloom,
To a land of blackness like midnight,
[A land] of gloom and disorder,
Where it shineth like midnight." [Chap. x. 20-22.]

If darkness be the "dam of horrors," this picture is one of the most fearful. Light is one of the most striking characteristics of the Christian description of heaven, and gloom is the leading feature of Job's Sheól. We have not words enough in our language to express this gloom. The mildest darkness in that blind world is midnight. Job says further of it:

"If I hope for Sheól as my house,
Have spread in the darkness my couch,
Have called to the grave, 'Thou'rt my father!
My mother! my sister! to worms:
Then where, O where is my hope,
Yea, my hope, who shall ever behold it?"

[*Chap. xvii. 13-16.*]

Job has entered, in imagination, the house which lasts till doomsday. He has spread his couch there, has called the grave by the tender word "my father"; he has greeted the worms as "sister" and "mother." He feels quite at home with them. Dante says he so imagined things he felt them; and so does Job. No more powerful imagination has ever expressed itself.

Another aspect of human life on which the author of Job spends much thought is the Fate of the Wicked. This is the theme of

some of his most characteristic and poetical passages. It is peculiarly the theme of Job's friends, as the elegiac passages are mainly by Job himself. The wicked are not followed into the next world, but the "Inferno" of the poem lies on this side of the grave, and its punishments are all believed to be fearfully real. The passages on the theme under consideration are so numerous that we shall be obliged to pass over many without the notice they deserve. We will choose a few as specimens of the poet's thought and skill.

In the vigorous language of Bildad, the wicked man is one "whose trust is a fragile thing,—

"And a spider's house is his hope.
He leans on his house, and it stands not,
He grasps it, it doth not endure.
He is full of sap in the sunshine,
And his shoots o'er his garden come forth;
Round a mound are his roots interlaced,
Between the stones he crowds through.
If He blots him out from his place,
It denies him: 'I never have seen thee.'"

[*Chap. viii. 14-18.*]

A spider's house, so frail that a fly may shatter it or a squirrel's foot tear it in pieces,—that is the emblem of a sinner's hope. His

hope is his wealth, his family, his house in a broad sense of that word. He leans on it in the day of distress, but it stands not; in his despair he grasps it, as a sinking man clutches at a spar, but it is all in vain. Again, the wicked is a luxuriant vine. It sends out abundant shoots; and its roots force their way between the stones of the mound on which it is planted. But when the Lord visits this luxuriant vine in judgment, it is so terribly changed that it is henceforth unrecognizable in the place of its abode.

Still more impressive is the description by the aged Eliphaz, in which the suffering of the wicked is represented as caused by the scourge of a bad conscience.

“The wicked man is in pain all his days,
And the sum of the years reserved for the tyrant.
A terrible sound in his ears—
In peace comes the robber upon him!
He expects no return from the darkness,
And chosen is he for the sword.
He roams for his bread—‘Ah, where?’
He knows that near by stands the day of gloom.
Distress and anxiety fright him,
It vanquishes him like a lance-trained king.”

[*Chap. xv. 20-24.*]

A single brief sentence, and a poor wretch

stands before us, terrified and trembling, outwardly in peace but seeing with the mind's eye the weapons and fierce looks of robbers. He already regards himself as a dead man. The figure changes, and this bad rich man is tortured by imaginary hunger, and sees himself wandering about in a vain search after bread. The poet hears his despairing cry, as he turns this way and that, exclaiming, "Ah, where?" We see the man with an evil conscience when he is at last overcome by distressful anxiety. He is vanquished by it as by a lance-trained king.

King Richard's account of an evil conscience is powerful, but is less concrete and picturesque than that by Eliphaz :

"O coward conscience, how thou dost afflict me !
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain."

[*King Richard the Third*, v. 3.]

Less profound than the words of Eliphaz, but hardly less vivid, is Bildad's description of the fate of the wicked. We quote some passages from it :

"The steps of his strength are straightened,
And his own advice casts him down.

For his own feet do ensnare him,
 And he walketh over the toils.
 A gin layeth hold on his heel,
 A noose doth fasten upon him.
 Concealed on the ground is its cord,
 And its net is hid on his path."

[*Chap. xviii. 7-10.*]

Even with short, careful steps, the sinner escapes not. He is self-ruined: his own counsel casts him down. The impossibility of escape, the suddenness of his fall, and the dishonor of his end, are admirably portrayed. Wherever the man goes, there are toils beneath him. A gin lays hold on his heel, and a noose fastens upon him. Its cord is concealed in his very path. Nets, toils, gins, snares, nooses,—the things he has used in his wickedness, the emblems of his own craft and guile,—these are before, behind, and beneath him, that he escape not.

In a following passage the poet weaves into his description some features of Job's own case.

"There catcheth the limbs of his frame—
 Eats his members, the first-born of death.
 He is dragged from his tent, his trust,
 To the king of terrors must march."

[*Chap. xviii. 13-14.*]

The "first-born of death" is a mortal dis-

ease,—a bolder figure than that of the Arabic literature, in which deadly fevers are called the “daughters of fate.” It is plain that this figure was chosen to describe the leprosy which was consuming Job. The picture of what follows after the first-born of death has eaten the limbs of the doomed one is intense and terrible. The ministers of death come to get the dying man. He resists, and they must drag him forth from his house. Then he is compelled to march off to the king of terrors. Compare with this characterization of death that by the Greek poet: “Thither leadeth me the queen of shadows.” This passage on the end of the sinner, in its vividness and rugged force, is unsurpassed. We can imagine Dante as speaking thus, but hardly a second modern poet.

It remains to notice what Job himself says of the fate of the wicked. Unlike the friends, he begins by describing the loss of the wicked man’s various possessions, saving the destruction of the wicked man himself until the last. First he speaks of the sinner’s family.

“If his sons increase, they’re the sword’s,
And his seed are not sated with bread.
His remnant are buried by death,
And as for his widows, they weep not.”

[*Chap.* xxvii. 14-15.]

That one's children should perish by the sword and hunger, is a heavy loss ; but heavier is the calamity when the affection of the most intimate friends is turned into cold indifference. Job assumes here the death of the sinner, but the disgrace that attaches to his memory is none the less a personal loss. What befalls the sinner's wealth is next described :

“ Though he heapeth up silver as dust,
And raiment prepareth as clay :
He prepares, but the righteous doth wear it,
And his silver the innocent shares.
He has built as a moth his house,
As a booth that a watchman has made.
He lieth down rich, but not twice,
He has opened his eyes, and is gone ! ”

[*Chap. xxvii. 16-19.*]

He not only loses his wealth, but it comes into the possession of the very people whom he hates. His strong house is, after all, most fragile, and in the twinkling of an eye both himself and his wealth disappear. He is rich a single night. In the morning he opens his eyes and lo, in the next breath, he is gone.

Then his fearful end is described :

“ Terrors o’ertake him like waters,
A storm bears him off in the night.
East wind lifts him up and he goes,

And it sweeps him away from his place.
And He hurls upon him unsparing,
From His hand he would utterly flee.
Men clap their hands at him,
And hiss him forth from his place."

[*Chap. xxvii. 20-23.*]

It would be difficult to conceive of a more fearful ending of life than this. Terrors, like a sudden flood, overtake the sinner, the dire forerunners of his awful end. His life has been black; it goes out in blackness. A violent storm sweeps him away in the night, as though he were but chaff. The description is completed by a reference to the attitude of God and men toward the sinner! The former hurls upon him His bolts without mercy, and the latter hiss him from his place. The wrath of God and the execrations of men are upon him. This painting is by a master-hand. There is nothing like it save in the *Inferno* of Dante. He alone has such terrible and vivid imagery.

There is yet a third aspect of life which the poet presents, especially in Job's retrospect and in his final plea. It is the life on which the smile of God rests.

After the contest with his friends was past

and Job's thoughts were free to turn whither they would, it was natural that he should flee from the mysterious and painful present to take refuge for a little space in the bright days gone by. As we look back through Job's eyes on his past life, we see that which enables us to understand the depth of his present misery, and the hope which now and then shoots up like an auroral light toward the zenith.

Let us hear his words :

“ Had I [months] like the months of the past,
Like the days when Elóah watched o'er me!—
When His lamp still shone on my head,
By His light I walked in the darkness;—
As I was in the days of my prime,
When God's counsel was over my tent,
While yet the Almighty was with me,
Around me my children.” [Chap. xxix. 2-5.]

How could a brighter picture of happiness and prosperity be drawn than is contained in these figures?—“the days when Elóah watched o'er me,” “when His lamp still shone on my head,” “when His counsel was on my tent,” “when the Almighty was with me.” Heaven lay about him. A light that never was on sea or land shone on his head. Ravished by the thought of that departed bliss, he dwells upon

the secret of it, and repeats again and again that the Lord was with him. Not only was God's counsel on his tent, but the family-circle was unbroken. His children were round about him. Then memory recalls his outward good-fortune.

“When my steps were bathing in cream,
And the rock pouring rivers of oil at my side.”

Even the rock became fruitful for him whom God loved. Job dwells with especial fondness on the honor which was shown him in those by-gone days. When he erected his seat in the place of judgment, the young men “hid themselves,” the old men “arose and stood,” even the princes were “chary of words,” and the noble ones “ceased” speaking (verses 7-10). He was clothed with honor because he had clothed himself with righteousness.

“I put on justness; it clothed me;
My right was as mantle and turban.”

At that time Job looked forward to a green old age.

“I said, In my nest I shall die,
And shall multiply days like the phoenix.
To the waters my root will lie bare,
And dew pass the night on my branch.

My glory still fresh will be with me,
And my bow will grow young in my hand."

[*Chap. xxix. 18-20.*]

The allusion to the beautiful fable of the phoenix is an appropriate dress for the thought of the long life that stretched out before him. Equally happy is the figure that follows, in which Job compares himself to a tree whose roots shall not lack water and whose branches shall be refreshed by the nightly dews. Neither will he lack honor in the future, and his strength will be continually renewed.

This retrospect gives place to a picture of the unhappy present (chapter xxx.), and then follows Job's final plea (chapter xxxi.). The ideal of pure and noble character which it contains is without parallel in pre-Christian literature. This ideal is presented in a simple, picturesque, and dignified poetical style. The figures are all from the scenes of common life. In picturesqueness and force this passage is remarkable, even in the poem of Job. Virtues and vices breathe and move. Job does not mention chastity and lust by name; but declares that he has made a league with his eyes, as two persons enter into a covenant for some common end. His eyes are under bonds not

to look on a maid. He does not speak of benevolence ; but of warming the poor man with the fleece of his lambs. Nor of superstition ; but of kissing his hand to the moon. A complete system of ethics is presented in a series of pictures, each of which is simple and clear-cut. Every figure seems perfectly adapted to the idea. The poet shows the highest skill in bodying forth abstract thought. He can compose as poetical an ode on a man's creed as on the works of Jehovah. He can make the common-place sights and experiences of daily life vehicles for the expression of the loftiest morality and the most intense feeling of a soul that is pleading its cause at the bar of God.

CHAPTER V.

THE POET'S CONCEPTIONS OF GOD.

REGARDED simply as poetry, the views of God to be found in the Book of Job have few parallels in any literature outside of the Bible, and even there are never surpassed. The magnificent descriptions of an Isaiah may be placed by the side of the poetry in Job; but there is nothing in classic heathen writers, and little even in the great Christian poets of modern times, that merits such an honor. Homer and Milton may be taken as fit representatives of the poets of these two ages; and we may compare their conceptions of the Divine Being with those of the poem of Job. While admiring the lofty genius of these writers, I believe that they themselves would have bowed before the unknown author of Job as one who brought from his harp sublimer strains than they. If a comparison should seem to substantiate this statement, we should not be left poorer in Homer and Milton, but richer as regards Job. This Hebrew poem is relatively unknown as a literary production. When it is studied, it is studied only for its teaching;

and furthermore, its literary merits are less appreciable in any translation that has been made than are those of Homer, Virgil, or Dante, in the translations of their works which we possess.

In drawing a comparison between Job on the one hand, and Homer and Milton on the other, it is of course not forgotten that they represent three widely different planes of revelation. One sings in the twilight of a revelation through nature and conscience; one, in the midst of a history illumined and exalted by supernatural displays of Divine power and grace; and the last, in the increasing splendor of a Christian civilization. Yet while not comparable as regards the absolute truth of their conceptions, it is possible to compare them as poets. This only is proposed.

Now we find, on studying Homer, that his gods are often laughable, often undignified, often less honorable and less poetical than his Greek and Trojan heroes; and they are seldom sublime. Longinus felt this when he said: "It almost seems to me that Homer tried to make his Trojans gods, and his gods men." It is amusing to read, for instance, how Oileüs identifies the dwellers on Olympus.

“Some god, O Ajax, from the Olympian hill, like the seer in form, doth bid us fight by the ships; for Calchas was it not, who augurs from the flight of birds: for well I marked from behind the foot-prints and the legs, as he departed; verily the gods are easily known.”—[*Iliad*, xiii. 68-72.]

One can scarcely prevent a smile on reading the answer which Sleep makes to the request of Héré, who asks her to close the glorious eyes of Zeus. Sleep relates how she had once lulled the senses of the Ægis-bearer, while Héré, planning mischief for Ulysses, waked the blasts of all the bitter winds to sweep the ocean, and then she adds:

“But he on awaking was wroth, hurling the gods about in the hall; but me he seeks before all, and me, banished from the ethereal sky, he would have cast into the sea, had not Night, the subdner of gods and men, preserved me.”—[*Iliad*, xiv. 256-259.]

Still more noticeable are the warning words which Zeus directs to Héré:

“Dost thou not remember when thou didst swing on high, and I hung two anvils on thy feet, and bound around thy hands a band of gold that none could break? Then in the air and clouds thou didst swing, and the gods through high Olympus were sorrowful, but no one, coming near, dared to loose [thee].”—[*Iliad*, xv. 18-22.]

This is rather too serious a matter to smile at, yet the scene that is brought before us—Héré suspended in mid-air with an anvil tied to each immortal foot to keep her straight—does not lie far from the ludicrous. Of the same character is the test proposed by the Father of the gods. If they doubt his supremacy, they can convince themselves of it by this simple experiment :

“Make now the trial, O gods, that all of you may know. Letting down a golden chain from heaven, do all ye gods and all ye goddesses cling to it, yet ye could not from heaven to earth draw down Zeus, adviser supreme, and though ye quite wearied yourselves in the toil. But should I now myself be inclined to pull, with the earth itself I should draw you up, and e’en with the sea. And then I would bind the chain round the topmost peak of Olympus so that all things would then hang suspended.”—[*Iliad*, viii. 15-23.]

But the Olympian deities not only appear in an amusing light, which detracts seriously from their legitimate effect even as poetical gods,—they are also often positively undignified. Pallas steals up behind Achilles and pulls his yellow hair (i. 197); Héré harnesses her own horses (v. 731); Pallas and Phoëbus assume the form of vultures, and sit in the top of a birch-tree (vii. 59); Thetis finds Vulcan

sweating and toiling, plying the bellows with busy hand (xviii. 339); Zeus seizes Até by the hair of her head, and swinging her on high hurls her from the starry heaven (xix. 126); all the gods go forth to mingle in the fight between Trojans and Greeks (xx. 32); Héré whips Diana, beating her about the ears with her quiver (xxi. 502). One might suppose that a god could attract the attention of a mortal in a more god-like way than by pulling his hair. Héré, as queen of the gods, spouse of Saturnian Zeus, would be acting in a way better becoming her state if she should dispatch a servant to bring her team. It is by no means beneath her dignity to work,—but she must work as a goddess, not as a common menial. The poet has no right to sacrifice her dignity. Again, we could have no objection if Pallas and Phœbus should choose the vulture as their favorite bird, but there is a lessening of respect for them as gods when they enter into the unclean carrion-eating vultures. Zeus himself is represented as a mere executioner, and a barbarous one at that. He seizes Até by the hair, and swings her around in the air before hurling her from the battlements of heaven. This picture is disagreeably human. If Zeus

were an uncultivated savage, we should feel that such actions were in harmony with his character; but call him a god, and indeed the supreme god, and our sense of what is becoming is harshly offended. Again, Héré whips Diana in the presence of Apollo and Neptune. This does not appear to us a fitting scene for the stage of epic poetry. One woman beating another is in no wise a poetical incident. The comic poet, wishing to satirize womankind or to amuse the vulgar, might introduce such an episode, but no serious poet can do it. Now if the action of one woman beating another lies without the sphere of serious poetry, much more does the action of one goddess beating another goddess. If Héré and Diana bear themselves no better than two quarrelsome women, the poet can not be considered to have achieved great success in his endeavors to represent them as goddesses. Indeed, Andromache and the wife of Ulysses appear to better advantage than Diana and the consort of the Cloud-compeller.

Furthermore, Homer's gods are immoral, and immorality injures their appearance in poetry. We cite only two instances of the immorality of Homer's gods, but these are conclusive. First, Pallas lies to Hector (xxii. 239).

While Hector is fleeing before the swift Achilles around the Trojan walls, Pallas approaches him in the form of Deiphobus, a brother of Hector. This was a lie, and a very mean one too. It awakened in the heart of a brave man the hope of assistance, while Pallas not only intended to leave him unhelpt, but purposed to aid his foe. The whole bearing of Pallas is ignoble, and if found in a man would justly give us cause to abhor him. But still more objectionable, if possible, is the circumstance that Zeus himself lies. He tells Agamemnon a deliberate falsehood in order to bring honor to the Trojan arms (ii. 8). Here again the lie is especially wicked, because it is treacherous. Zeus sends a dream to Agamemnon, bidding him arm the Greeks, for the hour has come when Troy shall fall. He, Zeus, pities Agamemnon, and has decreed the destruction of the Trojan city. Yet all this time Zeus is planning the ruin of myriads of Greeks by the side of their dark ships. And thus Zeus lies to his own children, which we have no reason to think that Hector or Nestor would have done. Indeed, as poetical conceptions, Andromache or Hecuba are less subject to criticism than is Zeus. Now we do not expect in a heathen

poet a perfect conception of moral character, but we have a right to look for at least as high a conception in his representations of the gods as in those of men.

We pass on to notice the sublime in Homer's conception of the immortals. They are by no means always undignified; they are occasionally described in lofty and majestic strains, and their actions are wholly worthy of their character. Some of the most notable examples of the sublime in Homer's descriptions of the gods are the following. The poet, speaking of Apollo's hostile approach to the Greeks, says :

"And he came from the heights of Olympus with wrath in his heart, on his shoulders bearing the bow and well-eovered quiver. Loud rattled the arrows on the shoulder of the angry one, as he moved along. He came like night. Then he seated himself far from the ships, and shot an arrow. A terrible clang resounded from the silver bow."—*[Iliad, i. 44-49.]*

Equally sublime is the nod of Zeus :

"He spake : and with his dark brows nodded the son of Cronius, and the King's ambrosial locks flowed forward from the immortal head : then trembled the heights of Olympus."—*[Iliad, i. 527-529.]*

This may be compared with Job ~~xxvii.~~ : XL : 6

“The pillars of heaven do quake,
And shudder at His rebuke.”

A third example is in the Fourteenth Book of the *Iliad*, where the poet describes the motion of two goddesses :

“Then on the firm land they moved forward,
and the crest of the forest trembled at their steps.”

We notice also the description of Neptune's escort in the Thirteenth Book :

“Sea-monsters, coming from their hiding-places,
sporting around him on every side ; they knew their
lord. With joy the sea divided, and they [his
steeds] flew as on wings, nor was the brazen axle
moistened beneath.”

Such instances of the sublime in Homer's conceptions of the gods are rare ; nor do even these select passages equal in beauty and majesty what is contained in the Hebrew poem.

If we glance now at Milton's conception of God, we find here also a painful lack of dignity which is less easily apologized for than is that of the heathen poet. Jehovah, speaking of the defection of the first man, is represented as saying :

“Whose fault [is it] ?

Whose but his own ? Ingrate, he had of me

All he could have.”

[*Paradise Lost*, iii. 96-98.]

But this is not God the Lord, of infinite majesty and glory: the speaker is an irritable, angry man. The passage breathes the bitter spirit of some sectarian, and not that of Him who is long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth. }

Again, Raphael, in his discourse, says to Adam concerning the race that should spring from him :

“If they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens
Hath left to their dispute, perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model heaven
And calculate the stars.” [Chap. viii. 75-80.]

The Bible ascribes laughter to God, but the occasions are very different from this. The Psalmist says :

“The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,
Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh,
The Lord shall have them in derision.”

[*Psalm* ii. 2-4.]

The occasion for laughter in Milton, being the quaint, scientific opinions of men, is trivial and

unworthy ; but the occasion in the Psalm, the proud and rebellious plotting of kings and rulers, is appropriate. Not less objectionable is the laughter spoken of in Book xii. 58-61.

Sometimes Milton's conceptions are not only undignified, but also positively belittling. For instance, God is represented as saying :

“ Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defense, lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.”

[*Chap. v. 721-724.*]

Zeus might have spoken thus, and the conception of him still remained high ; but for the God of Scripture to speak in this way is absurd. Must He advise with others how He is to hold His empire ? Is He, forsooth, thrown upon the help of angels for the defence of His sanctuary ?

More unworthy and unpoetical is the picture when the poet speaks of the creation of Eve. He relates a dream which Adam had while the deep sleep was upon him. Adam sees the Lord,

“ Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
And life-blood streaming fresh ; wide was the
wound,
But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.”

[*Chap. viii. 565-568.*]

The account which the Bible gives of the creation of Eve is poetical, though written in prose ; Milton's description is prosaic to the last degree, though written in verse. Homer paints many a bloody scene, enumerates repulsive details of slaughter and death. His heroes hew one another in pieces, the dark blood spurts forth, the marrow runs from the severed bones, and the axles of the chariots are covered with gore ; but repulsive as these details are, they do not seem to us to be so gross a violation of poetical taste as this scene at the creation of Eve. The Lord stooping over the sleeping Adam, holding in his hand a rib with cordial spirits warm, streaming with fresh life-blood—this is as unpoetical and as unparadisical a proceeding as can well be imagined. The most unintelligible mysticism of Dante is preferable to this scene of blood. These examples of the undignified and low in Milton's conception might be increased, but need not be for the present purpose. They are sufficient to enable one to feel the difference between Milton and Job. It will be readily admitted by everyone that Milton has sublime passages relating to God. No one speaks more grandly than he, when he says :

“Now had th’ almighty Father from above,
From the pure empyrean where he sits,
High throned above all height, bent down his eye
His own works and their works at once to view.”

No poet speaks more worthily and more augustly than he in the lines that describe creation :

“So sang the hierarchies : meanwhile the Son
On his great expedition now appeared,
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
Of majesty divine ; sapience and love
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were poured,
Cherub and seraph, potentates and thrones,
And virtues, winged spirits, and chariots winged
From the armory of God, where stand of old
Myriads between two brazen mountains lodged
Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
Celestial equipage ; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them spirit lived,
Attendant on their Lord ; Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates ; harmonious sound
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
‘The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.’”

And a third passage might be quoted, than which nothing has been sung of God that is more dignified and beautiful :

“God doth not need
 Either man’s work or his own gifts ; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best : his
 state
 Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o’er land and ocean without rest ;
 They also serve who only stand and wait.”

But with these choicest utterances of our great epic singer, who lived under the full light of Christ’s perfect revelation of the Father, we may compare the lines of the unknown author of Job. (First, we notice the words of Zophar’ on the unfathomableness of the Divine Being :

“Canst thou find out the depth of Elóah,
 Or fathom th’ Almighty’s perfection ?
 { Heights of heaven !—what canst thou do ?
 Than Sheól it is deeper !—what know ?
 Its measure is longer than earth,
 And broader is it than the sea.”

[Chap. xi. 7-9.]

✓ The exclamatory description of the Divine perfection is simple and sublime. “Heights of heaven !” Look up to the clouds and the stars : so immeasurably does the wisdom and power of God transcend human comprehension. Deeper than the unfathomable Sheól, long as the earth, and broad as the sea, is the

perfection of God. This representation is concrete, and perhaps impresses the mind more deeply through the senses than any abstract conception could do. The majestic power and unapproachable purity of God are portrayed by Bildad. There is no sublimer or more beautiful expression of the immeasurable gulf between God and man, as regards power and purity, than this description by Bildad :

“ Dominion and fear are with Him,
 Who maketh peace in His heights.
 Is there of His troops any number?
 And o’er whom doth not His light rise?
 How can man be just before God,
 How the woman-born one be pure?
 Lo, even the moon shines not brightly,
 And the stars are not clean in His eyes:
 Much less is frail man—a crawler!
 And the son of man—a worm !” [Chap. xxv.]

He maketh peace! There is no more beautiful and forcible way of expressing the sovereignty of the Almighty. There is no clash of arms, no shout of battling squadrons, no wounds or ruin. Perhaps our poet would not under any circumstances have described a war in heaven, as Milton does. But if there were

hostility against God, He has troops without number, and in no case would He need to be personally active in the conflict. [Milton, as will be remembered, represents the Son of God as leading in person the hosts of faithful angels, and as taking part in the battle with Satan and his legions.] This is a sublime passage, and as terrible as it is sublime. But there is a still sublimer conception of God as a sovereign, in relation to rebellious creatures, and it is briefly contained in the words of Bildad :

“ Dominion and fear are with Him,
Who maketh peace in His heights.”

Were there hostility toward him among God's creatures, a single calm word would suffice to lay the storm or hurl the offenders down into darkness and prison. Such is the sovereignty pictured in these lines. It is in a measure derogatory to the dignity of God that He should actually take part in battle. To represent Him as so doing is an anthropomorphism which can be justified only by the most intense feeling on the part of the writer (as in Job vi. 4), which feeling, in Milton's case, was necessarily wanting.

The remaining passages that we shall con-

sider are from the lips of Job himself. He not only knows more about the living God than do his friends, but on the whole he surpasses them all in descriptions of God's wisdom and power. First, Job's reply to Bildad (chapter ix. 4-10) :

“ Wise of heart and strong in might,
Who has dared Him, and yet remained whole?
He who mountains removes and they know not,
Because in His wrath He o’returned them ;
Who shaketh the earth from its place,
And its pillars do reel to and fro ;
Who speaks to the sun, and it shines not,
And setteth a seal on the stars ;
Who spreads out the heavens alone,
And walks o’er the heights of the sea ;
Who maketh the Bear, Orion,
The Cluster and Chambers of Teman ;
Who doeth great things beyond searching,
And wonderful deeds without number.”

Here, as in chapter xii. 13-25, the theme is the might and wisdom of God. In this case the poet draws his illustrations from Nature ; in that, from the dealings of God in History. In another passage (chapter xxvi.), he has to do again chiefly with the manifestations of God's wisdom and power in the natural world.

He evidently prefers this theme—God in Nature ; and he speaks on it more sublimely than he speaks of God in History.

The passage before us puts the power of God in the foreground, and with unsurpassed majesty. His hand moves the everlasting mountains and shakes the earth itself. Its pillars reel. The sun hears God's voice, and ceases to shine. The countless stars of heaven are hidden by the sealing touch of His hand. The canopy of the sky, as a vast and luminous tent, set with planets and stars, He spreads out alone, and over the waves of the sea, which, rising mountain-high, seemingly threaten the universal earth beneath this heavenly canopy with destruction—over these He walks, their ruler and lord. And the great constellations of the heavens—the Bear, Orion the giant, the Cluster which the Greeks called Pleiades, and the Chambers of the South—these unchanging witnesses of man's frailty, the same in their bright silence as generations pass, all these He made, and, as it were, re-makes, since He continually upholds them. The selection of objects is admirably adapted to the end in view, and the treatment is simple and vivid. The exalted actions of the Almighty are repre-

sented as taking place before our eyes, and they are all worthy of Him.

We should notice also the quiet majesty which characterizes these actions. God simply "speaks" to the sun. He does not, like Mars, shout as loudly as nine thousand men; He does not cry out, but only "speaks." Again, He "walks" on the waves of the sea; that is, He is calm in the midst of the roaring and tossing waters. There is no haste, no fear, no excitement. He is calm in the performance of the greatest deeds, and even though He be surrounded by tumult and confusion. Here is a sublimity to which Homer and Milton do not attain.

The passage in chapter xii. 13-25, which illustrates the wisdom and power of God from History, is not unworthy of our poet. It represents God as moving through human society, loosing and binding the girdles of kings, leading away to banishment those who were high in authority and esteem, bringing to naught the speech of the trusty and the judgment of elders, humbling and exalting the nations, and He is represented as doing this calmly and irresistibly.

The last example of Job's power to which

we call attention is the following passage:

“The shades suffer pains
Beneath the sea and its dwellers ;
Sheól is naked before Him,
And no covering hath the abyss.
He spreads out the north o’er the waste,
And suspendeth the earth over chaos.
In His thick clouds He shuts up the waters,
Yet a cloud is not broken beneath them ;
He encloseth the front of the throne,
He spreadeth upon it His cloud.
A circle He drew on the waters
To the last ray of light near the darkness.
The pillars of heaven do quake
And shudder at His rebuke.
In His might He exciteth the sea,
By His knowledge He shattereth Rahab.
By His breath are the heavens made bright,
His hand the flying dragon hath pierced.
Lo, these are the ends of His ways,
But what a mere murmur we hear,
And the roar of His great might who knows ? ”

[*Chap. xxvi. 5-14.*]

The poet draws on the universe in the following order: Sheól, heaven, earth, heaven. His last word, as the last word in each of the three parts of Dante’s great poem, concerns the sky.

Far down in the "blind world," at the greatest possible distance from the light and glory of God's dwelling, the shades, though insensible to joy and sorrow from other sources, feel the workings of God's power. To the extreme limit of the universe His hand reaches, and the most insensible creatures tremble before Him. *Sheól*, whose gates man has never seen (*xxxviii. 17*), the world wrapped in midnight, is "naked" before His eye; and so the whole universe is "swept forever by the vision and breath of God." He spreads out the northern sky, and suspends the earth over nothing. Then follows the cloud-miracle, daily repeated before our eyes. The general idea in the second reference to the clouds seems to be that God uses them to curtain His throne, when He comes near to the earth in judgment. The sea, whose rising is feared by men, God excites without fear, and He shatters the sea-monster *Rahab*, which, according to the folks' legend, was thought of as active in making the sea tempestuous. Turning his eye upward again, the poet sees how the heavens are made bright by the breath of God, and how His hand impales to the heavenly vault the flying dragon, the monster which was supposed to

darken sun and moon. But all these wondrous manifestations of the wisdom and power of God, when compared with the depths of His wisdom and power, are but as a murmur compared with the loud thunder, a magnificent closing to a magnificent description. Here, as before, the handling of the theme is concrete. Sheól and its dwellers, the northern sky, the earth hung in mid-air, the marvellous clouds, the mountainous pillars of heaven, the tempestuous sea and the flying dragon,—this is the sublime imagery which the poet employs. And it is used vividly, grandly, and in a manner worthy of Him whose power is portrayed. It is poetry that moves the soul of a child as well as that of the mature man. It is child-like in its outlook on the world, it is natural, transparent, sublime. It breathes a simple, large, beautiful conception of Nature and Nature's God. It is full of primitive strength and of reverent nobility. Homer is not so sublime, Milton is not so sublime; the Hebrew bard is their unapproachable master.







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